



THE INDEPENDENT

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DAVID BAILEY ANSWERS
YOUR QUESTIONS

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Serbs show signs of buckling

BY PHIL REEVES,
IMRE KARACS AND
RUPERT COWELL

AS TOP Russian and American officials met in Moscow and the refugee crisis on Kosovo's border reached breaking point, Yugoslavia yesterday sent out what could be its most serious feelers yet to end the war, suggesting it might be ready to accept a UN-led international peacekeeping force in the province.

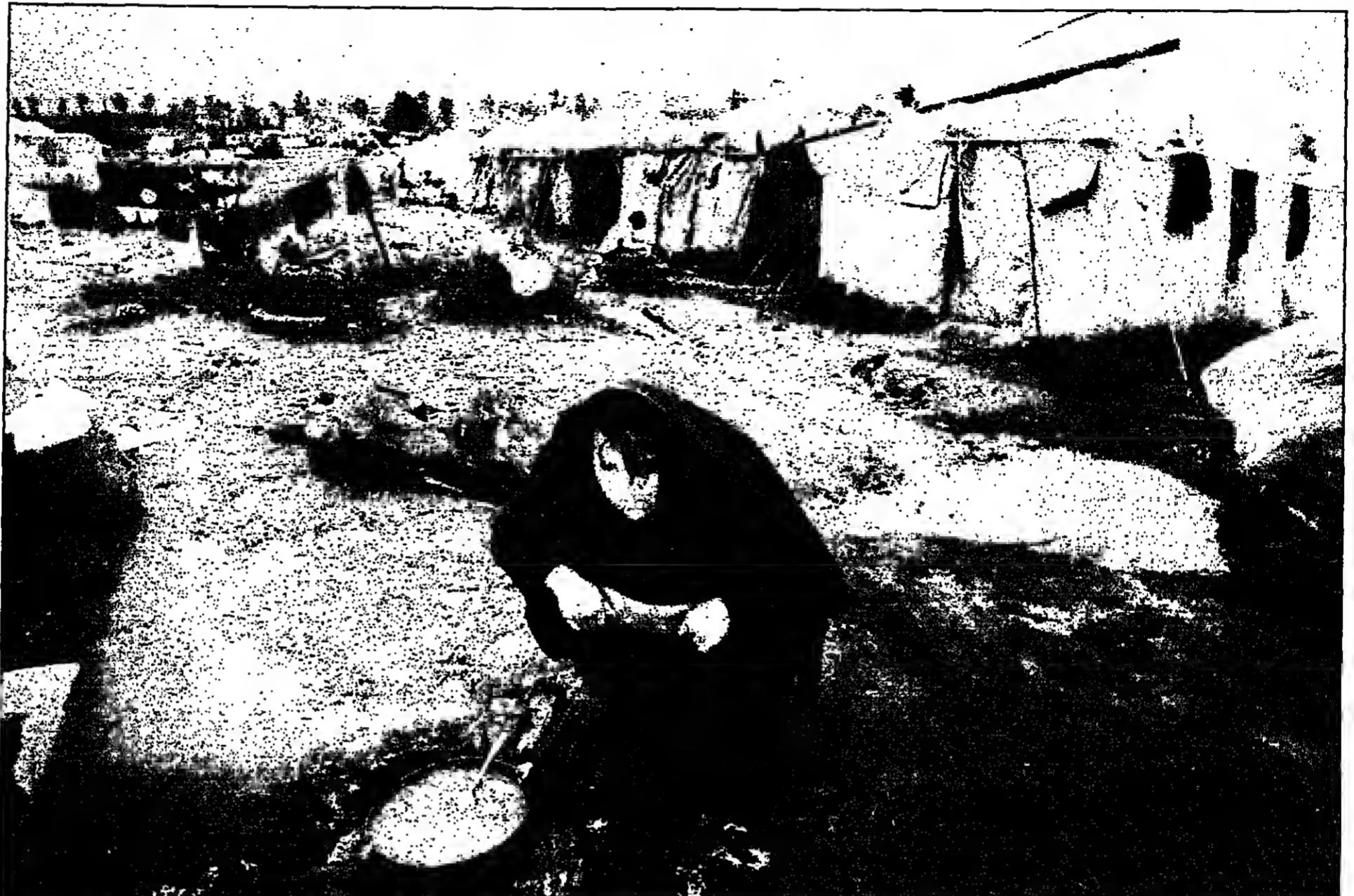
Although the precise status of the offer was unclear, emanating as it did from Vuk Draskovic, the unpredictable Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, rather than President Slobodan Milosevic himself, allied diplomats last night saw it as evidence that Belgrade might at last be starting to buckle under the pressure of five weeks of increasingly severe bombing.

As if sensing weakness in its opponent, Nato last night vowed an even more ferocious aerial campaign. The attacks so far were "only a fraction" of what was come, the alliance's supreme commander, General Wesley Clark, warned. As a result of the bombing and an intensifying oil blockade, "step by step, bit by bit, we are cutting off his ability to sustain his forces in Kosovo".

Stepping up the economic and military encirclement of Belgrade, President Bill Clinton last night authorised the call-up of 33,000 reservists, and announced that Washington is preparing a blanket embargo on exports of goods to Yugoslavia.

Nato intensified its action as thousands more refugees arrived in Macedonia, pushing camps way beyond capacity and raising fears among aid officials that disease could sweep the camps. "We are jammed to the breaking point," said Ron Redmont, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. He said that 3,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees arrived yesterday at the Blace crossing, while at least another 1,000 each crossed at Lojane and at Lipkovo.

Speaking at a crowded press conference in Belgrade, Mr Draskovic called on Russia and the West to reach a compromise on the peace process, which would be enshrined in a United Na-



A woman cooking over a campfire at a refugee camp in Kukes, near the Kosovo border in northern Albania, where conditions are 'at breaking point'

Tom Pilston

tions resolution. Though he admitted he had not directly discussed the proposal with Mr Milosevic, he said that it had been agreed by the Yugoslav President in talks last week with Russia's special Kosovo envoy, Viktor Chernomyrdin.

Whatever his authority, Mr Draskovic's words only underscore how Moscow, to all intents and purposes Belgrade's sole supporter in the conflict, has become the fulcrum of the sudden surge in diplomatic efforts to find a solution.

The early signs were that lengthy talks in Moscow be-

tween Strobe Talbott, the US Deputy Secretary of State, Mr Chernomyrdin and the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, did not succeed in generating a breakthrough beyond ending Moscow's long isolation on the Kosovo issue.

There was "no question that Russia and the US are working together on this problem," was all Mr Talbott would say afterwards, describing his discussions as "frank, serious and constructive" - a thinly coded acknowledgement that although the meeting had been valuable, both sides had aired and failed

to resolve their differences. Chief among these is Moscow's insistence, echoing that of Belgrade, that the first step must be a unilateral halt in the Nato bombing and a restarting of negotiations. The West's reply is that there is nothing to negotiate until Mr Milosevic pulls out his forces, allowing a

Nato-dominated international peacekeeping force to move in, and almost 700,000 Kosovo Albanian deportees to return home. Without guarantees on that point, there can be no bombing pause.

The gap, however, does seem more bridgeable on the make-up of the international

force, whose flat rejection at the Rambouillet peace talks by Mr Milosevic in mid-March led directly to the start of the war. Even Nato accepts that a Russian contingent is essential, while Mr Draskovic acknowledged that Nato countries could not be denied a part in it.

Re-emerging amid the spate of diplomatic activity and Mr Draskovic's *démarrage* is the German peace plan drawn up at the start of April, initially rebuffed by Bonn's Nato allies as too soft on Mr Milosevic but now the prime Western plan on the table. Once Mr Milosevic

starts to pull out his forces from Kosovo, it would grant a 24-hour break in the air strikes, to be extended if the withdrawal continues.

Last night, Mr Talbott was in Berlin for talks with German ministers and the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, himself on the way to Moscow.

'Nato attacks housing estate'

BY ROBERT FISK
in Belgrade

NATO WAS accused of killing as many as 20 civilians in the southern Serb town of Surdulica yesterday when aircraft reportedly fired four missiles into the centre of a housing estate, destroying dozens of homes and badly damaging a hospital.

Yugoslav government sources said that a "massacre" had occurred at midday when four Nato jets attacked the small textile town 40 miles south-east of the city of Niš.

Later reports said the death toll could rise because much of the centre of Surdulica had been destroyed in the attack.

There was no immediate response from Nato. A senior British officer had earlier reported that Nato had had "a good day" in its air strikes over Yugoslavia, listing an oil refinery and an office block in Belgrade among targets that had been struck.

Serbian state television RTS first reported that Nato air strikes had killed at least five people in the town. Serbian TV, which was bombed again by Nato yesterday morning, said rescue teams were searching for more bodies after the attack.

The Yugoslav news agency, Tanjug, claimed that Nato warplanes had dropped four bombs on the town at mid-day.

The reported killings at Surdulica occurred as Mr Vuk Draskovic, the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, suggested in Belgrade that an armed UN force could enter Kosovo with Yugoslav permission under a UN Security Council mandate.

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Tears and flowers as the people came to mourn their second 'English Rose'

BY KATHY MARKS



THE MAN in the black leather jacket looked as tough as they come but as he handed a bunch of flowers to the young police officer, he was too choked to speak. White with grief, they mourned her all the same. Something similar happened 20 months ago. The outpouring of grief is quietlier this time. Yet the comparisons are irresistible and were spelt out in a note pinned to a bunch of pink carnations. "We have lost another English Rose," it read.

Ms Dando may not have occupied the same place in the nation's affections as Diana, Princess of Wales, but she was treasured by the viewers of Middle England. And the parallels between the two women are uncanny. Both were blonde, both embodied something quintessentially English and both met a violent death in their mid-thirties, at a time when they had just found love and had every-

thing to look forward to. The bouquets laid in memory of Ms Dando evoked the vast carpet of flowers that took root a few miles away outside the gates of Kensington Palace.

And, as if the echoes of that extraordinary late summer of 1997 were not loud enough, people queued up to sign con-

dolence books at the BBC's headquarters in west London and at its studios in Plymouth, where Ms Dando had her first job in television.

Yesterday the cream facade of her three-bedroomed house was obscured by a white police tarpaulin and its wrought iron gates had been removed for

forensic examination. So the floral tributes had to be placed across the road.

Some of the bouquets were accompanied by handwritten messages. "To Jill Dando. In memory of a nation's sweetheart, from Bob, an admirer," read one. "Dear Jill, we only met briefly but I shall never forget your smile," wrote a fan called George. Another note stated, simply: "It's so wrong."

Gowan Avenue and the surrounding streets presented an image of suburban tranquillity yesterday - mothers pushing their babies' pushchairs, bursts of blossom in the trees, the murmur of a radio from inside a house where builders toiled. Not the kind of place where young women are shot in the head on a Monday morning.

The sense of disbelief was palpable among the people who stood in bundles outside the

security cordon, watching the police come and go. "It's so desperately sad, such a waste," said a grey-haired woman in a blazer and plaid skirt.

Scenes of crime officers conducted a fingertip search of Ms Dando's house and peered over neighbouring rooftops from a hydraulic lift. Police also scoured drains around the area and searched the banks of the River Thames at low tide.

Just before midday, a taxi drew up and the driver got out, clutching a bunch of roses, lilies and freesias. They had been given to him, together with a £20 note, by a scruffily-dressed young man who hailed him outside Victoria Station and told him: "Please, take them to Jill Dando's house."

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WAR IN THE BALKANS

"The Yugoslav leaders want the war to spill over into Macedonia and Albania, therefore what Nato is doing is a necessity out of evil"

Kiro Gligorov,
Macedonia's President

"Russia and the US are working together on this problem ... Our talks were very constructive, serious and frank"

US Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott

"The West must approve a compromise on the peace force ... I think President Milosevic is ready to accept a resolution"

Vuk Draskovic, Yugoslavia's Deputy Prime Minister

"It remains to be seen as to whether he [Vuk Draskovic] will be allowed to continue to tell the truth. It shows the facade of unity is cracking open"

George Robertson

"We are at breaking point. We will be seeing people sleeping in the open. But anything is better than what's in man's land"

Ron Redmont, UNHCR spokesman in Macedonia

"Russia is losing patience with Milosevic ... Russia could be particularly helpful to us in the context of the UN. We want Russia to be part of the solution"

Robin Cook

Apache crashes during training

WEAPONRY

By STEVE BOGGAN
in Tirana

THE MORE powerful and high-tech the weaponry, the more America's enemies rejoice when it goes wrong. So it proved again yesterday when, with the memory of the shooting down of an "invisible" stealth bomber still fresh in people's minds, the US military had yet another piece of wreckage to explain away.

This time, the debris in a field 30 miles north of Rinas Airport in Tirana, the Albanian capital, was from one of the long-awaited AH-64 Apache helicopters recently stationed there.

Much to the enjoyment of the population of neighbouring Serbia, living under the Nato bombardment, the helicopter crashed and burst into flames during a training mission at 10.15pm on Monday. Its two-man crew escaped with only minor injuries.

Fortunately for them, the accident happened during a search and rescue practice mission in the company of a Black Hawk helicopter which was able to scramble a recovery operation.

According to the American



US Army Apache helicopters similar to the one that crashed 30 miles north of Tirana yesterday

military, a Medevac helicopter was with them within seven minutes and, four minutes later they were in the hands of medics at the 212th Medical Army Surgical Hospital – the last of its kind in the US Army. The other Medevac units have been replaced by Combat Surgical Units.

Perhaps less fortunately for the Americans, a network television news crew was on board the Black Hawk and it is

understood they filmed the incident, footage which will probably find its way onto Yugoslav television.

Last night, the American military ruled out sabotage and enemy fire as causes of the crash, suggesting it was the result of mechanical failure. The 24 Apaches expected had already been reduced to 23 when one developed engine failure in Italy.

Nevertheless, the Army

was in a positive frame of mind. "We are not going to be wavering by this incident," said Lieutenant-Colonel Garrie Dornan. "This is the cost of doing business. We plan to drive on with our mission undeterred."

Each Apache attack helicopter costs \$16m (£10m). Much feared by troops on the ground, the Apache carries Hellfire guided missiles to destroy tanks, armour and

artillery, while using non-guided rockets and nose-mounted cannon to wreak havoc among "soft" vehicles and personnel.

It distinguished itself during the Gulf War when fired the first allied shots of Operation Desert Storm, hitting a radar site and creating a blind Iraqi corridor for allied aircraft.

Meanwhile American A-10 "Warthog" tank-killer jets were seen circling the skies over Kosovo yesterday for the Nato missions so far.

first time, in sight of the Albanian border. Several explosions were heard from the Morini border post, 12 miles north-east Kukes.

At the border station, guards

watched as the Warthogs dropped flares to ward off heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles. No missiles were seen fired at the aircraft, which fly lower and slower than the jet fighters that have carried out most of the Nato missions so far.

MEDIA WAR

By STEPHEN CASTLE in Brussels

SIX BRITISH officials have been seconded to Brussels to staff a new unit designed to manage Nato's faltering media operation along the lines of successful election campaigns in Britain and America.

The move was seen as evidence of fears within Nato that it is losing the propaganda war: "It shows they have anxieties about the way that the propaganda war is going," said one critic of the bombing.

There have been a series of propaganda blows to Nato, including the mistaken attack on the refugee convoy in Kosovo, splits in Nato over the bombing of broadcasting stations in Serbia, dissent over the oil embargo, and above all, lack of

coherence about Nato's policy on ground troops.

The group, operating from two meeting rooms inside Nato's headquarters in Brussels, is designed to relieve the pressure on Jamie Shea, the alliance's over-worked press spokesman, and modernise his communications operation.

Alastair Campbell

Tony Blair's press secretary, will spend most of this week in Brussels, and at Shape (Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers in Europe), the alliance's military headquarters in Mons, 50km south of the Belgian capital.

Mr Campbell was partly responsible for raising the expectations that Nato would endorse the use of ground troops, but the subject was carefully kept off the agenda at the Nato summit by the Americans. The Prime Minister also

went to Washington with headlines suggesting that he was giving a lead to Nato, but having set the tone, he avoided

giving any lead to Nato, by holding any press conferences at the summit, leaving it to Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, and George Robertson, Secretary of State for Defence, to answer questions about Britain's role.

Washington meanwhile has seconded three staff, including Jonathan Prince, a White House speech-writer, and both Bonn and Paris are expected to augment the team, although their staff had not arrived yesterday.

Nato are su

BRIEFING: DAY 35

■ The Foreign Office has provided £100,000 funding to restart the Albanian-language newspaper, *Koto Ditor*.
■ Over 300 British troops have arrived in the Greek port city of Salonica to reinforce Nato troops stationed in Macedonia. British military vehicles arrived on board a ship carrying 30 containers of military equipment.
■ A total of 1,800 British troops are expected in Macedonia in the next few days, the majority flying directly to the capital, Skopje.
■ Japan will give an additional \$20.4m (£12.75m) in emergency aid to help ethnic Albanian refugees.
■ The Czech government says three planes will be sent to Macedonia to transport Kosovo Albanians to the Czech Republic.
■ Finland has received its first Kosovo refugees (160).
■ The Rev Jesse Jackson is leading a 20-member delegation of US religious leaders to Yugoslavia, hoping to secure the release of three American soldiers and provide Milosevic with an "honourable way" to resume peace negotiations. The delegation will include rabbis, Muslim clerics and Serb-American religious leaders.
■ Kuwait Television has raised \$7m (£4.3m) for refugees in an all-day drive to help fellow Muslims.

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ROBERT F.
IN BULGARIA

WAR IN THE BALKANS

It's spring in Belgrade, so could the first signs of a truce be in the air?

ROBERT FISK
IN BELGRADE

Is it the beginning of the end? In the spring sunshine in Kneza Mihaila street yesterday, it felt like it. The coffee shops were packed and a small crowd had gathered outside the headquarters of Yugoslavia's Deputy Prime Minister, Vuk Draskovic, who had been talking of a return of Kosovo Albanian refugees, of UN resolutions and UN forces, and long conversations with Mr Gazprom himself, the Russian envoy Viktor Chernomyrdin.

The morning papers were touting the Moscow visit of the American diplomat Strobe Talbott. Even Nato had spent its 34th night over Belgrade bombing an office block it had already destroyed; which was a bit like trying to set light to an old bonfire.

Wars tend to end when each side can drag something for itself out of the embers. And peace in the Balkans now - with UN troops in Kosovo - would present rewards to all involved. Nato could abandon a ferocious five-week air bombardment that has not saved a single Kosovo Albanian - and at the same time avoid a bloody ground war.

The Yugoslavs could save their remaining infrastructure while claiming correctly that only their refusal to submit to Nato's ultimatum prevented Nato troops entering Kosovo. The Russians would be brought back into international peace-making as mediators and as an ally in the UN Security Council.

The United Nations - the old, bankrupt donkey to which America always turns when it runs into trouble - would hobble in to take over the mess (with Nato claiming, of course, that the donkey could never have hobbled into Kosovo without alliance "resolve").



Vuk Draskovic, Yugoslavia's Deputy Prime Minister, speaking at yesterday's press conference

up to the Security Council. "The UN (would) serve in Kosovo under the flag of the UN and under the mandate of the UN Security Council," he said. "This means we are very close to compromise. Who will do what first is not a crucial point - will Nato stop its aggression before our state forces start their withdrawal from Kosovo, or will our state forces commence their withdrawal and then Nato stops? The best thing is that both sides do this at the same moment with the full approval of the Security Council ... In the UN flag, we can recognise our own national flag. In the UN flag, we can recognise our own state's security. Often in the past Serb soldiers under the flag of the United Nations, participated in peacekeeping missions in many parts of the world."

So the UN, it seems, are the good guys again in the Balkans. And Mr Kofi Annan - much condemned by the Yugoslav foreign ministry in the early days of the war as an American mouthpiece - is on the way to Moscow and may even (though Mr Draskovic didn't say so) be invited to Belgrade. There must be an "urgent" Security Council resolution on Kosovo "which both sides, Nato and Yugoslavia, must respect".

Then - suddenly - Mr Draskovic's words needed a pinch of salt: indeed, a whole ton of the stuff should have been carted into his party offices. The Serbs were enduring the same suffering as the Jews under the Nazis, we were told. Serbia was proud to be compared to the Jews. "Every day, Serbia is closer to Hiroshima."

We gritted our teeth - did we hear a pigeon fluttering up there at the front of the room? The 500 Yugoslav dead of Nato's bombardment - or the 400 death toll which the Yugoslav Minister of Health, Dr Leposava Milicevic, confirmed to us a few hours later - very definitely does not compare to the murder of six million Jews. Nor to the quarter of a million Japanese who died at Hiroshima (although on this occasion Mr Draskovic had at least recognised that the United States bombed both Japan and Yugoslavia).

AP

Albania and Macedonia would be happy to see the back of the tens of thousands of destitute Kosovo refugees, who would go home under the "protection" of UN troops, who might be armed and who might include troops from Nato countries. There would be no independence for Kosovo, but there might - if Mr Draskovic is to be believed - be considerable autonomy. The KLA would have to lay down its guns; it wouldn't be the first ethnic minority guerrilla army to be betrayed by Washington.

Mr Draskovic claimed yesterday that the composition and mandate of a UN force was the only area of disagreement ("or 2 per cent") between himself and President Slobodan Milosevic. The President says Nato troops cannot be part of a UN troop commitment; Mr Draskovic says the UN Security Council would have to decide.

In reality, it is not difficult to see how an acceptable mixture of nations might be included in a peacekeeping army. Yugoslavia's old Orthodox ally Greece, and Italy - which has

maintained good relations with Yugoslavia throughout the war - might provide Nato contingents. Russia could send troops (Washington has already agreed to this), while neutral EU nations with UN experience - Sweden and Ireland, for example - might be invited to join the force; along, perhaps, with India, the nation which helped to form the non-aligned movement with Yugoslavia.

But these are early days and Vuk Draskovic is not the President of Yugoslavia, even if one sometimes gets the im-

pression he would like to be. It was only 12 hours since the very tired and emotional leader of the Serbian Renewal Party turned up at the Hyatt Hotel to announce that the Yugoslav army was occupying the pro-Draskovic Studio-B television station; yesterday, Mr Draskovic agreed that the only soldier to turn up had left after half an hour and was welcome to take coffee with him in a downtown restaurant.

In other words, Mr Draskovic - a fierce opponent of Mr Milosevic until he was seduced

into the President's coalition government - is the sort of chap whose words should be taken with a very large pinch of salt. In 1991, when he was addressing crowds from the balcony of the Belgrade National Theatre, Mr Draskovic earned the nickname of "Golub" - Serbian for pigeon - because, in the words of one of his former supporters, "pigeons sit on balconies and shift about".

But Mr Draskovic's performance yesterday - a qualified repeat of his Monday night interview on Studio-B but this

time in English and in front of scores of Serb and foreign journalists - was impressive. Although he had not spoken to Mr Milosevic for two days, Mr Draskovic said he had held a long private conversation with Mr Chernomyrdin only a few hours earlier - and that Mr Milosevic was in any case "ready and must be ready to accept resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations". The composition of a UN force for Kosovo would be

Nato seeks right to board ships which are suspected of breaking oil embargo

NATO WILL today debate plans to escalate its stranglehold on Serbia by allowing military commanders to board Russian ships suspected of supplying oil to the Belgrade government, and to bomb a fuel pipeline inside Montenegro.

As the alliance delivered a more cautious estimate of the quantity of oil remaining at the disposal of the Serbian military, Nato's supreme allied commander, General Wesley Clark, pressed for tough new rules of engagement which would allow the search of vessels arriving in Montenegro.

That plan, along with a separate study on the possible bombardment of a pipeline inside Montenegro, will be debated by Nato's political chiefs at a meeting of the North

Atlantic Council today. If given the go ahead, the stop and search regime could bring the alliance into conflict with Russia which has said it will ignore the oil embargo.

However the alliance's concern over the quantity of oil still arriving in Serbia was underlined by an assessment from General Clark that 10 ships are arriving each day at the port of Bar, and unloading 24 hours a day. That compares with the two or three vessels which docked at the Montenegrin port before the air bombardment.

Although Montenegro is a part of the Yugoslav republic, it has stayed out of the conflict and Nato has been unwilling to make it a military target.

The alliance, which has previously claimed to have de-

FUEL BLOCKADE

BY STEPHEN CASTLE in Brussels

stroyed 70 per cent of Belgrade's refining capacity, yesterday produced a different and less impressive statistic, claiming that 33 per cent of Serbia's military oil reserves had been eliminated.

With the concentration on the need to block off more oil, General Clark said "any visit and search regime has, of course, to have appropriate rules of engagement to be able to use the threat of force". He added that "if it is approved (by the Nato ambassadors) the officers dealing with the merchant ships will give them appropriate instructions."

The alliance hopes that merchant ships will contact them to seek clearance for cargoes sailing into the area. But a Nato source suggested that, under international law, Nato naval commanders would be allowed to board and search all vessels, including Russian ones, and - if they were found to be carrying oil - warships would be able to escort them to port.

With a new point of conflict with Moscow looming, there was added gloom within the alliance at the lack of progress on the diplomatic track during talks held by the US envoy, Strobe Talbott, in Moscow.

The former Russian prime minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin,

said that Belgrade had agreed to an "international presence" in Kosovo with Russia's participation, but he acknowledged that such a group, which would be only lightly armed, was well short of Nato's demands. "Nato thinks that primarily its forces will participate in Kosovo", it will take time to work out this issue in detail," he added.

Nato officials say that the international force could include Russians and Ukrainians, as well as troops of other nations which have taken no active part in the air campaign, such as Greece. Their presence is seen as an advantage because it could reduce the risk of attack from remaining Serb forces.

But Nato diplomats are insistent that the force must be under Nato command and con-

trol, rather than be of the type that was humiliated in Bosnia.

One diplomat argued: "Its existence could be covered by a UN resolution, but it is not going to be a blue helmet operation." Nato's planning is based on the assumption that its missions will include the force lead by General Sir Mike Jackson, the Commander of the Allied Command, Europe, Rapid Reaction Corps, which is currently based in Macedonia.

Yesterday General Clark reiterated his conviction that the air campaign is being successful, arguing that it is eroding Yugoslavia's morale, leading soldiers to desert and encouraging draft-dodging. "We're picking up an increasing numbers of deserters and declining morale among the troops."

Help desperate plight of victims

THE FLOOD of refugees from Kosovo continues and the refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania are at breaking point. Aid agencies say that thousands of people are sleeping in the open. More than 600,000 Kosovo Albanians have fled their homes and most of them are destitute and face an uncertain future.

The generous readers of *The Independent* have donated a tremendous £750,000 which has helped to buy food, blankets and hygiene kits.

The Disasters Emergency Committee has organised a co-ordinated appeal to ensure that your money quickly goes to help those who need it most. This appeal has raised a total of £25m. The joint appeal ends at midnight tonight and will then be re-

placed by separate appeals by the DEC's member charities.

To make a donation:

Please send a cheque or postal order payable to Kosovo Appeal to the Disasters Emergency Committee to: PO Box 2710, London W1A 5AD. Or call 0890-22 22 33 to make a credit-card donation.

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Refugee camps at breaking point

THE EXODUS

BY KATHERINE BUTLER AND FRANCIS KENNEDY

A NEW tide of Kosovar refugees flooded into Macedonia yesterday, stretching packed camps to breaking point and raising fears that the Serb leader Slobodan Milosevic is intent on destabilising Yugoslavia's most vulnerable neighbouring state.

Three thousand arrived in Blace, the main crossing point on the border with Kosovo. More than 12,000 Albanians have crossed into Macedonia since the end of last week and the United Nations believes almost 150,000 more will come. "We are now jammed to breaking point," said Ron Redmond, spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Macedonia, after bus and train loads flocked to the already full Radusa camp near the capital, Skopje, yesterday.

A number of refugees had reported Serb atrocities, aid workers said, including one report that 16 people had been massacred at a village called Slavi last week.

Large numbers of people were reported to be waiting at railway stations along the Prishtina-Blace route. Stations and bus stops were crowded and yesterday's train was too full to stop at Urosevac, between Prishtina and the border.

Many of the 3,000 people who streamed into Blace on Monday were still waiting to be registered yesterday.

A new camp at Cegrane in

western Macedonia for up to 20,000 people will not be ready to take refugees until later in the week.

Mr Redmond predicted that people would soon have to sleep in the open under plastic sheeting because there are not enough tents to accommodate them.

Macedonia's Foreign Minister, Aleksandar Dimitrov, said his country could not cope with the latest influx and would certainly not be able to assist 150,000 more. The Macedonian government has been reluctant to designate new areas for refugee camps, fearing the refugees may become permanent residents and tilt the ethnic balance between Slavs and Muslims.

Reports of a further big wave of refugees were echoed by the UNHCR. "We have received very credible reports suggesting that 150,000 more people are on their way out of Kosovo," said Lyndall Sachs, in London.

"These are the numbers we are now making contingency plans to deal with."

Rachel Reilly, a Human Rights Watch researcher in Macedonia, said there were worries about overcrowding in the camps. "The two biggest transit camps are completely crammed. You can hardly walk between the tents. Sanitation is almost non-existent."

She said there were grave concerns that Macedonia, which has taken in a total of 175,000 refugees since air strikes began, would close the borders, trapping tens of thousands of people at the border. This would violate its commitment to take in refugees under the Geneva Convention, she said. Another worry is the unreasonable restrictions on the freedom of movement of refugees inside camps, and the alleged harassment of Albanians by the Macedonian police.

She said aid supplies were still pouring into Macedonia but the country did not have the infrastructure for accommodating such vast numbers of people. "There is no long-term planning. This situation is just not sustainable."

Macedonia has sent about 26,000 refugees to third countries but airlifting refugees out of the Balkans is controversial and the red tape is slow. "We don't like this policy," said Lyndall Sachs, "but we have to do it."

Britain and Spain took their first refugees on Sunday, while others have recently been sent to Austria, France, the Netherlands and Turkey.

Three plane loads left on Monday carrying 149 refugees to the Netherlands, 135 to Sweden, 134 to France, 137 to Finland and about 250 to Turkey.

The refugee agencies are aware, however, that the public sympathy shown to displaced Kosovars in western Europe could turn sour. "We have had



Refugees being sprayed with disinfectant at the Macedonian border crossing point near the village of Blace yesterday *Mladen Antonov*

letters from people in Britain saying that they want the Government to take in refugees but not asylum-seekers."

More than 365,000 people have fled from Kosovo into Albania which is still operating

an open-door policy. But the UNHCR has warned that Albania also desperately needs more international assistance.

More than 1,000 Kosovo refugees arrived on the coast

of southern Italy yesterday, prompting concern that a much-touted flood of refugees was about to become a reality.

A tourist boat normally used for river cruises arrived in Bari from Montenegro carrying

234 Kosovars, including 70 children, four of them newborn babies.

Other, smaller groups were found huddling on the beaches between Brindisi and Lecce or wandering in the country-

side. The police said 1,355 people arrived between midnight and noon yesterday. The vast majority of the new arrivals are from Kosovo, though they include Kurds and people from Albania.

America sends call to 33,000 reservists

STRATEGY

BY ANDREW MARSHALL in Washington

THE US yesterday called up some 33,000 military reservists for duty in Kosovo, the latest stage in its creeping escalation of the conflict.

By taking many part-timers and civilians away from their families, the call-up will bring home to America that it is being drawn into a regional conflict. The call-up had been expected for some weeks, and involves mainly back-up forces - tanker pilots and crew. Others will support the detachment of Apache helicopters in Albania and some will work on port duties.

The US has 1 million reservists who have regular civilian jobs but stay trained for military service. The active US military force is 1.4 million.

The US has also confirmed an earlier decision to send an extra 30 KC-135 tankers to Kosovo in addition to the 120 already deployed. It is due to send in another 200 combat, reconnaissance and support aircraft to boost the number of aircraft in the area to over 1,000, of which more than 800 are American, according to the Federation of American Scientists, a Washington-based think tank.

Hungary said yesterday it had agreed that 20 NATO tankers could be based on its soil and that between 50 and 70 combat aircraft may also be based there in the future. Until now Hungary - one of NATO's newest member states and the only one with a border with Serbia - has been cautious about being drawn into the conflict.

The slow but steady growth in US forces in the region has made Congress uneasy, with

TIMETABLE: DAY 35

Monday 26 April
9.40pm: US Apache helicopter crashes at an airfield in Tirana.

10.10pm: Sirens sound in Belgrade.

11pm: Explosions heard in Novi Sad and air raid sirens in Kragujevac.

Midnight: Serbs report explosions at Sombor, near Hungarian border.

Tuesday 27 April

12.10am: Huge blast shakes 23-storey building housing Milosevic's Socialist party and several broadcast stations. TV transmitter destroyed.

4am: Nato targets Lipjan region south of Pristina and nearby Slatina airport.

5.15am: All-clear sirens sound in Belgrade.

5.45am: Three cluster bombs launched near agricultural school on outskirts of Pristina. Serbs report several missiles launched in western Kosovo cities Decani and Pec.

7am: Strobe Talbott, US Deputy Secretary of State, starts talks with Igor Ivanov, Russian Foreign Minister.

7.05am: Air-raid alert in Pristina.

11am: Nato hits a bridge, for the fourth time, connecting Kosovo with rest of Serbia. Surdulica village near Bulgarian border struck by four missiles.

3pm: Iraq's President, Saddam Hussein, expresses support for Milosevic and his people.

4pm: Serbs say Nato has hit targets on Mount Gole, near Lipjan, southern Kosovo.

5pm: Serbian TV says at least five were killed in Surdulica attack.

Faked
Dando
on the

THE BALKAN QUESTION

KEY ISSUES BEHIND THE WAR EXPLAINED

Is the partition of Kosovo a practical idea?

Many people have suggested that splitting Kosovo into two might solve the dispute, leaving Serbia with most of its holy sites and the areas where Serbs are concentrated. But it is difficult to see how any agreement along the lines of the 1995 deal in Bosnia might be engineered here.

The biggest problem is that Albanians are dispersed almost equally all over Kosovo while Serb settlements are isolated.

One group of Serb villages clusters around Pristina, while others are grouped around Prizren, on the Albanian border, for example. There is no neat border that could be drawn through Kosovo.

Nor are the historic sites that

mean so much to Serbian public opinion conveniently close to

the border with Serbia. Kosovo Polje, site of the celebrated battle of 1389, is just outside Pristina, only about 20 miles from Serbia. Likewise the monastery of Gracanica. But the Serbs' other famous sites are many miles away, on Kosovo's western border with Albania. It is difficult to see how a

MARCUS TANNER

partition line could be drawn that leaves Serbia with the cathedral of the Serbian patriarchs at Pec, or with the monastery at Decani. If Kosovo is divided, there would have to be a big forced movement of population, with many Albanians surrendering their homes.

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MARCUS TANNER

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point

THE INDEPENDENT
Wednesday 28 April 1999

Killer waited an hour to strike

JILL DANDO was shot dead by someone using a hollow-point bullet fired from a 9mm handgun fitted with a silencer - details that point overwhelmingly to the work of a hitman.

Police said yesterday that they believed the killer waited for an hour outside the television presenter's home in Fulham, west London, for her to return from a shopping trip. They spoke of seven witnesses who may have seen the suspect, including a window cleaner - who thought the man was an estate agent waiting for a client - another cleaner and a mother with her child. The man made no attempt to hide or avoid being spotted, pacing up and down the road.

The *Independent* understands that while detectives are investigating other possibilities, they believe the killing was almost certainly committed by a professional.



Jill Dando: Shot dead by a hollow-point bullet

BY KIM SENGUPTA
AND ANDREW BUNCOMBE

Yesterday, police confirmed that Ms Dando, 37, had been shot in the side of the head at very close range with a single bullet from a semi-automatic handgun. The shot caused massive injuries and Ms Dando died a little over an hour later. The use of a hollow-pointed bullet is extremely rare.

Detectives are focusing their attention on reports of a well-groomed, smartly dressed man, carrying a mobile phone, who was seen in the road where Ms Dando lived just seconds before she was fatally wounded. The same man was seen briskly leaving the scene.

A man fitting a similar description was seen a little later climbing over railings on the bank of the River Thames a few minutes walk from Ms Dando's two-storey home. Police said the man may have been using a disguise - in particular large dark-coloured glasses which one witness noticed and said looked too big.

Then, possibly a few minutes later, another man waiting at a bus stop in Fulham Palace Road saw a man running down the road. He was described as wearing a dark blue suit and was seen weeping profusely.

Yesterday Detective Chief Inspector Hamish Campbell, the officer heading the murder inquiry, said: "At this stage we will look at every avenue. A whole range of matters will be looked at. [Ms Dando's] private life will be one of the areas that will be explored."

Detectives yesterday spoke to Mr Bassil at his home in Portsmouth, Hampshire. Now a computer analyst, Mr Bassil

Police investigating the killing of television presenter Jill Dando conducting house to house inquiries in west London yesterday

Russell Boyce/Reuters

came to Britain from Africa in 1997. Ms Dando broke off their relationship soon after. "I have spoken to police. They have come to my house today," he said. "I found out about Jill's death from my mum. It's all speculation at the moment about her killing. I have spoken to her family and expressed my condolences."

Ms Dando was shot at around 11.45am on Monday on the doorstep of her home after returning from Hammermill from the Chiswick home of her fiance, Alan Farthing. She was found by a neighbour who heard her scream and when he rushed downstairs he found Ms Dando slumped

against the door, covered in blood and unconscious.

Det Ch Insp Campbell said yesterday that there were a number of reasons why people did not report hearing a shot. But it is understood that officers believe the killer almost certainly used a silencer. One witness reported hearing a clicking noise, a sound associated with guns fitted with such devices.

Police sources said yesterday that a semi-automatic handgun fitted with a silencer and ammunition could be bought illegally for £1,000. Without a silencer the gun - most likely a Browning, Glock or a Tanfoglio - could be purchased for as little as £500.

It is understood that Ms Dando's attacker used a "quarter-tipped" bullet which are designed to spread out on impact causing maximum damage. Such bullets cannot be bought legally.

Police are also investigating whether Ms Dando's killing could be the result of a grudge borne against her because of her work with the *Crimestitch* programme. Officers have spoken to co-presenter Nick Ross and other members of the programme's team about security in the wake of the shooting. However, their initial inquiries through police informants have revealed nothing about anyone trying to

obtain a hitman "to do Jill Dando".

Officers are also investigating the possibility that Ms Dando was killed by a stalker, although they said yesterday that she had made no recent complaint.

Medical experts said that the stalker theory could be valid. They said details of her death could fit in with someone who had become obsessed by her, and who might even be suffering from De Clerambault's syndrome, a rare form of sexual obsession.

The type of gun used was school massacre in Scotland in March 1996, but hundreds are believed still to be in circulation.

Criminologist Kate Broadhurst, of the Scarman Centre for the Study of Public Order, Leicester, said: "The sawn-off shotgun is the weapon of choice for the bank robber... this is the weapon of the drug dealer and the weapon of the professional criminal." The type of bullet used in the attack is one that has been used in a handful of incidents in Britain.

Mr Campbell said that his team was examining a range of possible motives for the murder. "It could either be a stalker or a hitman. However, there are many theories to be explored and nothing will be left untouched. Everything is being looked at."

Faked images of Dando abound on the Net

JILL DANDO was not only a regular visual visitor to millions of homes around the country, she was on-call day and night at the mere touch of a button.

A plethora of images of her, both innocent and obscene, were depicted on the Internet - available to devoted fans as well as those with a more sinister motive.

Yesterday, as detectives investigating her murder continued to explore the option that she may have been killed by a stalker, it was evident that such a murderer would have had ample cyber-material to fuel his fantasy.

Her unofficial home page, which closed down on Monday, was the most regularly accessed site on the *Celebrity WebRing*, which attracts more than 100,000 hits a month.

And this was just one of many offerings which either eulogised the television star or reduced her to a pornographic fantasy by superimposing her face on a naked body.

Yesterday many of these sites fell quiet out of respect but dozens more continued to display photographs of Ms Dando without any reference to the horror which had cut short her life.

BY TERRI JUDD

The BBC Online page was one of several sites to carry genuine tributes to the star from fans, colleagues and charities. Acting as an impromptu book of condolence, it was receiving e-mails expressing sympathy at the rate of four a minute yesterday.

But they provided a sharp contrast to others such as *Nude Television Stars & Celebrities* which boasted blue movies or other sites which offered "hardcore pictures" of everyone from Elizabeth Hurley to Carol Smillie.

Yesterday Dr Sidney Crown, a consultant psychotherapist to the Royal London Hospital who regularly deals with stalking victims, said: "It (a website) provides a lot of scope for potential stalkers. There are always vulnerable people who are borderline who can be pushed over the edge by such things."

"Although a sophisticated person who saw a celebrity's face superimposed on a naked body would not give it any credibility other more vulnerable people might choose to believe it is real. The images fuel their own fantasy of that person undressing."

Brother tells of moment he heard of the murder

BY GARY FINN

JILL DANDO'S brother said yesterday that when he saw his sister three weeks ago she could barely contain her excitement over her forthcoming wedding. Nigel Dando, the chief reporter on the Bristol *Evening Post*, said their Sunday lunch revolved around her wedding to Alan Farthing. Yesterday both men were inconsolable.

But while Mr Farthing, 35, a gynaecologist at St Mary's Hospital in London, was too distraught to speak about the incident, Mr Dando returned to work to pay tribute to his television presenter sister.

"She was looking forward immensely to getting married... the wedding was planned to the last detail," he wrote yesterday in the *Evening Post's* sister paper the *Western Daily Press*. "I have spoken to her fiance, Alan Farthing. He is devastated and I feel sorry for him."

Forty-seven-year-old Mr Dando, who was comforting his father Jack, 81, said he would remember his little sister most of all for being "a very, very kind and very loving person who always put her family



Nigel Dando: Jill was a devoted sister to me

first. She was extremely natural, she was friendly, she was bubbly, she was happy, she was loving. It wasn't an act.

"I've been ill recently and she was constantly on the phone checking how I was. She was devoted to my father and was a devoted sister to me," Mr Dando added.

The journalist said he was working in the *Evening Post* newsroom yesterday when he received phone calls asking if he had heard about an incident.

"I tried to do some calls of my own check on what had happened and then a news

flash came through on one of the TV channels.

"I'm devastated by the news. I have no idea what the motive was for this. My father is bearing up well but obviously it has come as a huge, huge shock to him, as it has to me and all her relatives and friends."

Mr Farthing's father John, 64, said yesterday of his son: "I think that the full shock has not set in. He has got a lot of extremely good friends who are being supportive. He is making regular calls to us but we are not pressuring him. It is all in his own time."

He added: "We are absolutely shattered. She was readily accepted into the family and we could not ever have wanted a better person as a daughter-in-law."

The couple had planned a wedding with a dress designed by Linda Cierach, who made Sarah, Duchess of York's wedding dress in 1986.

In a statement yesterday Ms Cierach said: "I have known Jill Dando for some years, both professionally as a dress designer and as a friend. In recent times, I was greatly honoured to have been asked by Jill to design her wedding dress. To me, Jill was an extraordinarily special person with a radiant and magnetic personality. I am utterly shocked and devastated by her untimely death."

The BBC now has the task of deciding what to do with the television programmes Ms Dando was due to appear in. It will be a decision that has been taken over the future of its new series, *The Antiques Inspector*.

The Bafta Television Awards on 9 May will now be solely presented by Michael Parkinson. *Crimestitch UK* will go ahead next month but Nick Ross will present it alone.

CONTRACT KILLING is a growth business. Professional hitmen, almost unheard of in Britain only 40 years ago, can now be hired for as little as £1,000.

Experts believe more than 30 assassinations take place in Britain every year by an estimated 20 active professionals. The bodies are sometimes never found.

The murder of Jill Dando closely matches the blueprint for a professional hit, in terms of location, timing and method of execution.

Detectives say that typically, victims are targeted on their doorsteps as they arrive home or answer a knock at the door. The 9mm semi-automatic is, along with the old-fashioned revolver, the contract killer's weapon of choice.

Ms Dando's murderer also followed the first rule of such executions, which is to fire from point-blank range.

But instead of using a motor cycle for a quick getaway and wearing a crash helmet to hide his face, as is usual for hitmen, Ms Dando's murderer apparently lingered in the street, undisguised, before the killing, and left the scene on foot.

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

According to Ian McKenzie, deputy director of the Institute of Criminal Justice Studies at the University of Portsmouth, hitmen are usually low-level criminals, who are expendable if killing goes wrong and who cannot be readily linked to those who paid for the hit.

He said: "They will necessarily have some expertise with firearms and may have a military background. They are also psychopaths who have lost, or never had, any concern about the sanctity of human life."

Terence Morris, emeritus professor in criminology at the London School of Economics, said such people were now readily available among the "heavies" used by criminals in the drugs and entertainment trades. He said: "The growth of clubs has produced enforcers who regard injuring people as part of their job."

According to the National Crime Squad, the ban on handguns does little to limit the supply of firearms to criminals. Automatic weapons, smuggled from eastern Europe, are freely available.

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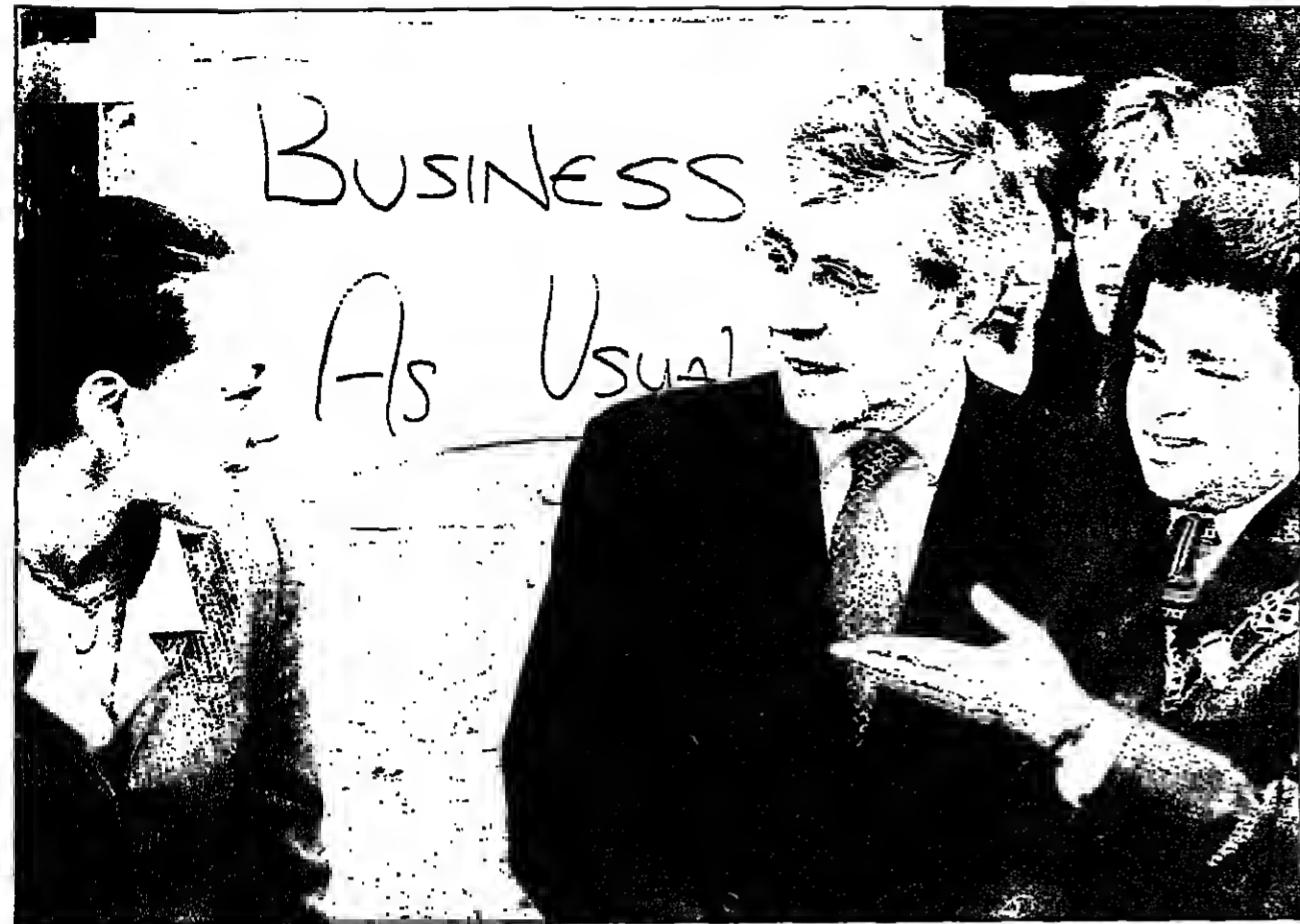


WITH THE INDEPENDENT TOMORROW

'We waste a lot of talent in this country. We need an Oxbridge entrance based on IQ'

PETER LAMPL, UNIVERSITY REFORMER, IN THE EDUCATION SUPPLEMENT

THE BEST WRITING, WEEK IN, WEEK OUT: DEBORAH ROSS, HOWARD JACOBSON, HAMISH MCRAE, IAN JACK, ROBERT FISK, TERENCE BLACKER, SUSANNAH FRANKEL, BRIAN VINE, PHILIP HENSHER, JOHN WALSH, RICHARD WILLIAMS, DAVID AARONOVITCH, DEBORAH ORR, THOMAS SUTCLIFFE, MILES KINGTON, SUE ARNOLD, ANDREAS WHITAM SMITH



Jack Straw in Brick Lane yesterday with the local MP, Oona King, and Abdul Assad, mayor of Tower Hamlets. PA

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Police seek leader of neo-Nazi gang

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

POLICE WERE last night trying to track down the leader of a breakaway neo-Nazi gang which has claimed responsibility for the nail bombings in Brixton and Brick Lane.

Detectives are anxious to question Del O'Connor, the leader of the White Wolves, a renegade faction of the racist Combat 18 group, which has been calling on its supporters to initiate a race war.

A stencilled message, circulated last Friday, read: 'C18 did not carry out the Brixton bombing. We, the White Wolves, did.'

Last year Mr O'Connor, 39, made a film in which he boasted: 'We have been forming small cells and if you're wondering where the money has gone, it's gone on guns

supremacists and he is known to have attended a skinhead concert in Coventry the following month, but is said to have recently 'disappeared' from his home in Wigan, Lancashire. Following the claims of responsibility from the White Wolves, police investigating the two London bombings, in which a total of 45 people were injured, want to speak to Mr O'Connor, if only to eliminate him from their inquiries.

Mr O'Connor, who comes from Streatham in south London, close to where the Brixton bomb exploded 11 days ago, considered himself the leader of C18 in the north of England. He claimed to have 'units' in Bridlington, Halifax, Preston and Oldham.

He was a skinhead in the British Movement in the late Seventies, before joining the Ku Klux Klan and becoming its UK 'security officer'.

Mr O'Connor set up the White Wolves at the end of 1995, after serving a three-year jail sentence for assault. He also served a six-month prison sentence in Sweden after attacking an anti-racist while visiting

Swedish neo-Nazis.

The White Wolves may be named after a ruthless Nazi war unit called the Werewolves.

In crudely produced pamphlets called *The Wolf*, issued from 'The Wolfstar', the gang calls on members to send letter bombs to the addresses of immigrant and anti-racist organisations.

Minority communities in cities across Britain are on alert after police warnings that the bombing campaign is likely to spread outside London.



Del O'Connor, leader of a Combat 18 splinter group

THE METROPOLITAN Police has been forced to issue an apology for issuing a misleading public statement about the behaviour of a black man who died after being restrained by eight police officers.

Scotland Yard apologised yesterday to the family of Roger Sylvester for the distress it caused by claiming in a press release that he had been behaving in an 'aggressive and vociferous' manner. Dick Fedorco, the Met's director of public affairs, said the force now accepted that this was not true.

At the time the statement was issued, Mr Sylvester was on a life support machine. He never regained consciousness and his death is now the subject of an investigation under the supervision of the Police Complaints Authority.

Yesterday Mr Sylvester's brother, Victor, said the family was still not happy with the



Roger Sylvester: Life support switched off

comments made by the police. 'The family demanded from the outset a clear correction by the Metropolitan Police of the image left in the public mind by their press statement. We are really distressed that no proper correction or public apology was issued by the police at the time, particularly as the errors in the statement have been reproduced time and again in the media,' he said.

Inquest, a group which campaigns against deaths in custody, accused the Met's spin doctors of placing in the public domain 'partial, inaccurate and deeply prejudicial information'.

The comments made in the police press release were attributed to a 999 caller. But yesterday Mr Fedorco said: 'The 999 call ... on 11 January did not describe Roger Sylvester as behaving in either an aggressive or vociferous manner.'

Mr Sylvester, 30, died in January after being held under the Mental Health Act outside his home in Tottenham, north London. He collapsed in hospital after being restrained by officers and was placed on a life support machine which was switched off a week later.

IN BRIEF

Bill Cash libel jury discharged

A HIGH COURT jury yesterday failed to reach a verdict on the MP Bill Cash's libel action against *The Sunday Mirror* for calling him a 'gutless turncoat' who ditched the miners in their hour of need. The jury was discharged. Mr Cash must consider whether he wants a retrial.

Cocaine seized on banana boat

CUSTOMS OFFICERS have seized £1.7m of cocaine on a banana boat, which stopped in Falmouth, Cornwall, on the way to Poland from Colombia. The boat was inspected by customs officers who found two waistcoats, each said to be holding 8kg of 70 per cent pure cocaine.

Soldier roasted hamster to death

A SOLDIER who ironed a hamster before roasting it to death in an oven was jailed for 140 days by a court martial panel and reduced to the ranks. Lance Corporal Nigel Horsley, 23, of 29th Regiment, Royal Logistic Corp, had drunk 20 pints of beer before attacking a colleague's pet.

Chef returns apple-growers' fee

THE CHEF Gordon Ramsay has returned a £3,500 promotional fee paid to him by the Bramley Apple Growers Association to promote their traditional fruit - after he decided to use Granny Smith apples instead during a filmed cookery demonstration.

Girls' prison conditions 'unlawful'

BY JO BUTLER

GIRLS AND young women are being held illegally in a prison where inmates are still 'sitting out' - a practice which was supposed to have ended years ago, a report warned yesterday.

An inspection of Brockhill women's prison in Redditch, Worcestershire, found that under-21s were being held in adult prison cells.

The Chief Inspector of Prisons, Sir David Ramsbotham, said it contravened a legal ruling two years ago that young prisoners should be held in designated accommodation and suggested the inmates could be being held illegally.

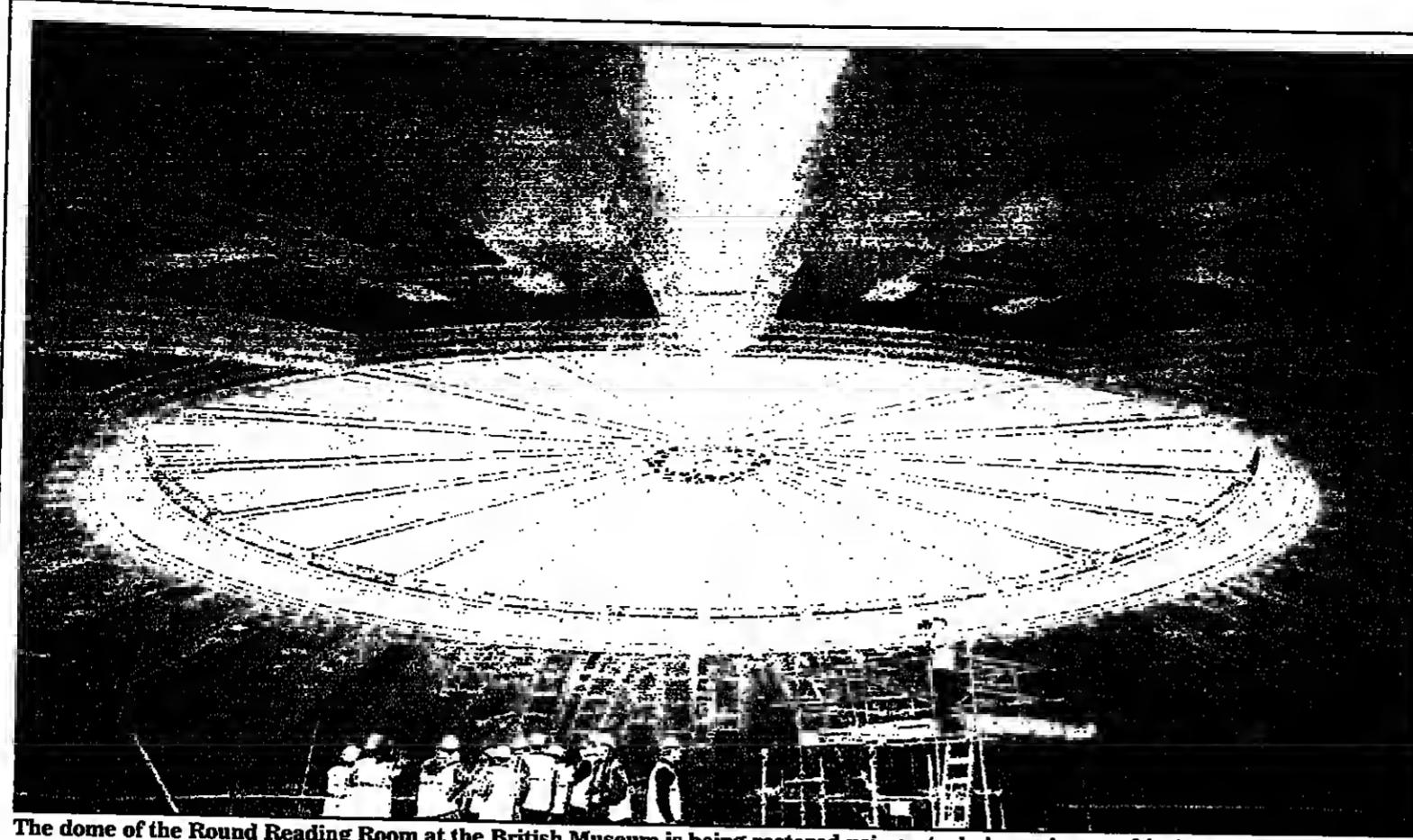
Sir David also criticised laundry arrangements at the prison, where chamber pots are sometimes used overnight.

NOTICE OF MORTGAGE RATE CHANGE

Rate of interest charged to variable rate loans will reduce by 0.10% from the 1st May 1999. This notice is applicable to borrowers whose mortgage payments are updated annually. The effect of this change will be included in the Annual Update of payments in January 2000. The variable base rate of mortgage interest will be 6.85% for residential mortgages and 7.85% for commercial mortgages.

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The dome of the Round Reading Room at the British Museum is being restored using a technique pioneered by Lord Nelson John Voo

Nelson comes to aid of reading room

EXPERTS RESTORING the British Museum's famous Round Reading Room are using a technique devised by Lord Nelson to make his ships watertight.

When the domed room opened to the public in the mid-nineteenth century it was hailed as one of the most remarkable interiors in London. Since then the original appearance has been lost under three radical restorations.

Now specialist restorers have been able to reveal exactly how the space would have originally looked.

One of the problems they faced, however, was that the dome contained a network of cracks. These were caused by the shrinkage of the dome's papier-mâché panels and the thermal expansion and contraction of the iron structure supporting the timber joists.

BY DAVID LISTER
Media and Culture Editor

on to which the panels are

terday unveiled the innovative repairs. Now that the British Library has moved to its new premises in St Pancras the Round Reading Room will be used as a specialist arts library, open to everyone.

The reading room's restoration is part of the museum's redevelopment of its central space, the Great Court, one of the nation's landmark millennium projects. The reading room will open to the public when the restoration of the Great Court is completed in November 2000.

The restoration of the Great Court includes the repair of the interior surface and the reinstatement of the original azurite-blue, cream and gold decorative scheme devised by the original architect Sydney Smirke. His 1857 scheme has been uncovered beneath layers of paint from the three previous redecorations.

Ticketing structure 'exploits' rail users

RAIL PASSENGERS are paying too much for their tickets because they are confused by the "chaotic fares jungle" that has developed since privatisation, it is claimed today.

Passengers are forced to choose from up to 30 fares between major UK destinations, with ticket prices varying sometimes by hundreds of pounds, according to a new survey.

Commuters can find themselves sitting next to a fellow passenger who has paid a fraction of the price to travel on the same train.

A survey in the May issue of Reader's Digest magazine has found passengers often buy a more expensive ticket than they needed to. Analysis of the National Fares Manual found there were 29 different fares between London and Glasgow's Central and Queen Street stations, with prices ranging from £25 to £29.

Susannah Hickling, deputy editor of Reader's Digest, said the situation, repeated across the country, was complicated by the number of restrictions on travel that were impossible for ordinary travellers to unravel.

The system is further confused by the fact that although 60 per cent of fares are regulated, companies are free to hike up the rest to any level they like.

Jonathan Bray, of the lobby group Save Our Railways, said:

Passengers constantly com-

plain that rock-bottom fares they see advertised are never actually available."

The national rail passenger watchdog, the Central Rail Users' Consultative Committee, received 1,109 complaints on fares in 1998, a 78 per cent increase on the previous year. A spokesman, Philip Wilks, said: "It's a very complex fares structure and we would like to see it made simpler." But he acknowledged that with public subsidy falling, operators had to exploit the difference between regulated and unregulated fares. "We have to cut through the maze without cutting the flexibility. Removing some fares could mean prices rocketing."

The Association of Train Operating Companies (Atoc) said a new system, the Rail Journey Information System, was being introduced. "This will throw up the information more speedily and will make the existing variety of tickets far easier to handle," said a spokesman.

Last year, the Government called on train companies to simplify fares after it emerged some ticket prices were being hiked by 10 times the level of inflation. The issue is likely to be high on the agenda of Sir Alastair Morton, who will head the Government's planned Strategic Rail Authority.

"Passengers constantly com-

From London to:	No. of adult fares	Max	Min
Glasgow	29	£225	£29
Birmingham New Street	24	£114	£14
Edinburgh	20	£225	£30
Manchester	19	£170	£19
Exeter	17	£234	£20
Newcastle	16	£212	£30
Bristol TM	15	£162	£15
Cardiff	14	£182	£20
Plymouth	9	£281	£25
Southampton	7	£84	£19.50
Brighton	6	£66	£14

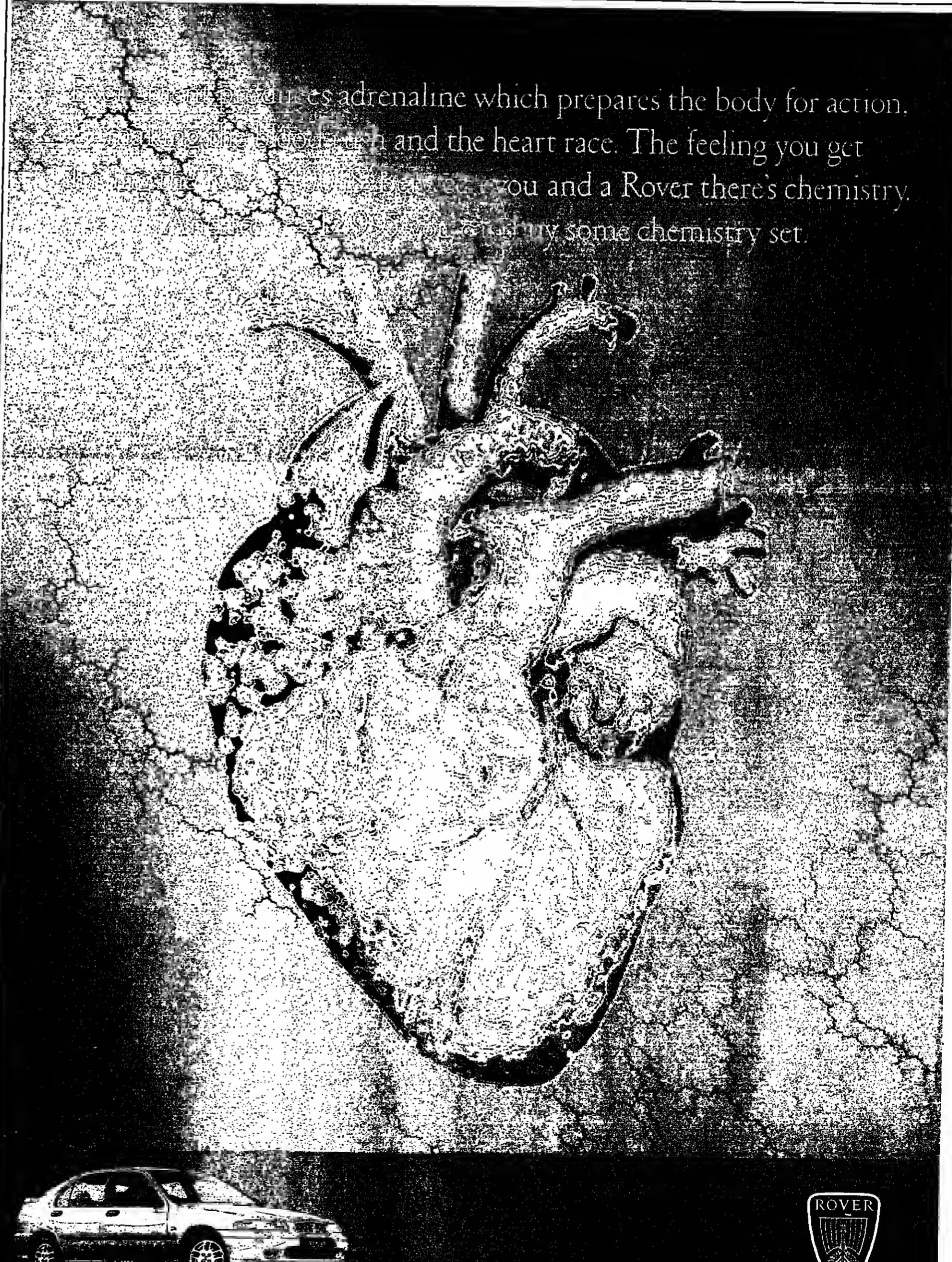
Source: Reader's Digest

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Earl delivers double whammy on hereditaries' demise

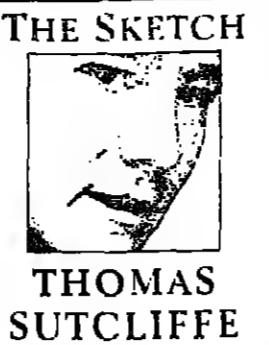
AS HISTORICAL tableaux go the Secretary of State for Scotland's last appearance at the despatch box before the Scottish elections lacked a certain oomph - not very surprising really given that one of the more important dramatis personae, Alex Salmond, was nowhere to be seen. "Wha's your leader?" shouted Labour backbenchers at the lonely John Swinney, the sole member of the Scots Nats who could be spared from shoring up the party's collapsing election hopes. But Mr Dewar himself took a kindly line on his isolation: "In case anyone says something nasty about that from my side," he said. "I think we should

have some consideration for those who might lose their seats." Mr Swinney grinned bravely - sympathy is one of the vilest substances you can pour on you by an opponent higher in the opinion polls, and he had just taken a tubful.

Mr Dewar was in a pretty chipper mood all round - buoyed up, perhaps, by the exciting refrain that rang through ministerial replies: "From 1 July 1999 this will be a matter for the Scottish Parliament" - and though there weren't many opportunities for his dry wit he did his best. After his very last question as Secretary of State, a drably informative reply to Teddy Taylor, he

apologised for the lack of entertainment: "I'm not sure that's the most exciting answer I've given but I hope, as it's likely to be my last, that it will have helped the Honourable Member." Mr Taylor muttered something sceptical about the prospect of ever seeing some Scottish members again. But Mr Dewar had reassurance: "He and I have been shouting abuse at each other for some 30 years - I'm sure he'll want that admirable level of operation to continue".

The porridge of the Commons will lose some of its salt without Mr Dewar. And the Lords will undoubtedly have less savour without



THE SKETCH
THOMAS
SUTCLIFFE

the hereditaries too - as they proved with a brief flurry of straw-clutching during the second day of debate on the committee stage of the House of Lords Bill. The Conservatives had detected what they claimed to be an error in the drafting of the Bill. Hereditaries did not sit by virtue of their peerages, they argued, as the current wording implies, but by virtue of a writ of summons from the Queen. The Government viewed this bit of constitutional piddling with considerable suspicion, despite repeated protestations from the Opposition benches that they only had the Government's peace of mind at heart. If the Bill passed in its current form then who knows what legal challenges could follow? Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish

memorably tried to clarify matters with a sporting metaphor: Imagine that we were trying to ban cricket, he said, and had failed to be specific about ball games in the legislation: "Supposing we did not specify a hard leather ball, and we just meant balls?" He looked the picture of innocence as peers sniggered but I had a feeling he knew exactly what he was doing. And in that respect of course, although entertaining, he doesn't deliver the unique flavour that only the hereditaries can supply. Calculated nonsense is within the grasp of a life peer. But for the wild flare of instinctive tosh you need members of more venerable pedigree. Earl Ferrers supplied a good example yesterday, first insisting that he and his colleagues sought nothing but to protect the Government from its own folly, and then going on to point up the deep irony that Tony Blair should be fighting ethnic cleansers in Yugoslavia and pursuing "hereditary cleansing" in London. As I imagined a poignant straggle of refugees making its way across St James's Park, I realised that Earl Ferrers had pulled off a double. He supplied incontrovertible evidence of why the hereditaries should be dispensed and a reason for regretting that they soon will.

Senior Tory quits as 'civil war' deepens

THE TURMOIL at the top of the Conservative Party deepened last night when a senior Tory official resigned following William Hague's attempt to make a clean break with Thatcherism.

Michael Simmonds, the party's director of membership and marketing, is believed to have been told to leave Conservative Central Office (CCO) when he was summoned to a meeting with Michael Ancram, the party chairman, yesterday.

Mr Simmonds is a close political ally of Michael Portillo, the former cabinet minister who has criticised Mr Hague's return. He was regarded as a "rising star" by fellow Tory officials.

Friends said he was unhappy at last week's rejection of free-market solutions for education, health and welfare by Mr Hague and Peter Lilley, his deputy. "He is the first casualty of our civil war," one Tory insider told *The Independent* last night.

Mr Simmonds, who was not available for comment, played a key role in the 1997 general election campaign as political advisor to Brian Mawhinney, then party chairman, and his successor

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

By ANDREW GRICE
Political Editor

Lord Parkinson, before taking over responsibility for membership involvement and marketing.

His departure followed a mole-hunt at CCO launched after it emerged that the first draft of Mr Lilley's controversial speech went even further in distancing the party from Baroness Thatcher's legacy.

The leaked draft showed that Mr Lilley had planned to say: "Most Conservatives have always accepted that the public services are intrinsically unsuited to delivery via the market." It also said "market processes have at best an auxiliary role to play" in providing health, education and welfare.

Mr Lilley watered down his speech - in which he said that the market had "only a limited role in improving public services" - after criticism from Shadow Cabinet colleagues. But the leak added to the controversy over Mr Hague's policy switch.

The party leadership sought to play down Mr Simmonds' de-

parture last night, with sources close to Mr Hague saying it was "not the end of the world".

But Tory MPs were gloomy as the news spread at Westminster. One said Mr Hague's attempt to relaunch the party with a "caring" image on public services had backfired spectacularly by advertising Tory divisions ahead of next week's elections to local authorities and the Scottish and Welsh assemblies.

Tory headquarters said in a statement that Mr Simmonds had resigned his office. Mr Ancram said: "Michael Simmonds has given substantial and committed service to our party, for which I am grateful."

Mr Hague's allies insisted he would press on with his drive to reposition the party. "He is determined to get the message across that we are committed to the public services and to the public services as predominantly taxpayer-funded organisations," one aide said.

Today Labour will seek to exploit the Tory divisions, with three ministers claiming the Tories are still "lurching to the right" on policy despite Mr Hague's "warm words".

More than 400 MPs had their painting talent and their memories assessed yesterday by a judging panel put together by the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The charity, which is building up to a campaign climax next month, has persuaded MPs of all parties in England to visit pre-schools - which cater for under-fives outside main-

stream schooling and rely on voluntary funding and grants - talk to parents and children, and paint a childhood memory.

Three pictures were chosen yesterday and the artists will take part in a "paint-off" for the alliance's "From Playdough to

Plato" day in London on 12 May. Margaret Lothrie, chief executive of the charity, said yesterday the competition aimed to highlight the importance of play and learning for children, particularly in areas of poverty and unemployment where facilities at home may be few.

Mrs Lothrie said that of 17,500 pre-schools, 1,500 had

closed last year and 1,700 were threatened this year. She added that the introduction of the minimum wage had put an extra burden on many which were operating on a shoe-string.

Margaret Hodge, Education minister last month announced an independent review to look at pre-school closures, which is due to report in August.



Spider, by the Tory party leader, William Hague

MPs paint their memories of childhood

EDUCATION

By ANNA DEDHAR

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Spider, by the Tory party leader, William Hague

Irvine warns peers their legal challenge is doomed

HOUSE OF LORDS

By SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

mented until the end of the current five-year Parliament.

Lord Irvine of Laird insisted during the resumed committee stage of the House of Lords Bill that the legislation in its present form was "water-tight" and in "no way unambiguous or obscure in its intent".

The Tories intend to exploit an apparent legal loophole, saying a key part of the Bill is flawed and cannot be imple-

mented by virtue of an hereditary peerage. Membership of the House is conferred by obedience to a writ of summons'.

There are those who say the writ is merely a summons. That once it has been answered, once the peer has come to this House then the writ cannot be used as a means to eject a peer. A peer who has answered the writ and taken his oath, sits here as of right. This is going to set aside centuries of constitutional practice and precedent."

But Lord Irvine insisted that the abolition of hereditaries

was a "concept which the ordinary man in the street, and the judges, will have no difficulty in construing".

Earlier, Lord Trefgarne, a former defence minister, said peers were determined to defy the Government and petition the Lords on the grounds of the historical precedent once the legislation has passed.

"I think the position will be that if we are excluding from the House at the end of this session by the alleged effect of the present Bill, then come the next session we can come back and say, 'Excuse me, we are ready to start again'."

Fresh talks will try to end the Ulster impasse

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Lawrence leak report soon

THE INQUIRY into the leaking of the report on Stephen Lawrence's death will be reporting shortly, Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, said.

Access pledge

DISABLED PEOPLE will get full access to shops, restaurants and banks from 1 October, the Employment minister, Margaret Hodge said.

Tourist board

A NEW body, the English Tourism Council, is to be set up, the Secretary of State for Culture, Chris Smith announced.

Back in jail

THE HOME Office minister, George Howarth, said more than 300 "tagged" prisoners have had their licences revoked or been returned to custody this year.

NORTHERN IRELAND

By COLIN BROWN
Chief Political Correspondent

all that he could to assist the search for a breakthrough in the deadlock, but the two leaders were agreed that there was little sign of any progress.

Privately, Mr Blair has told his colleagues that a way through the impasse could be found quite easily, as the two sides, Sinn Fein and the Unionists, were prepared to compromise. He still believes that the Hillsborough declaration remains the best way through the blockage, but that it is now virtually a dead letter with the main parties.

John Hume, the leader of the nationalist SDLP, has put forward a fresh initiative, suggesting that the Sinn Fein leaders, Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, should be appointed to the assembly's executive, but that they could be removed if there was any return to violence by the IRA.

THE HOUSE



Spider, by the Tory party leader, William Hague

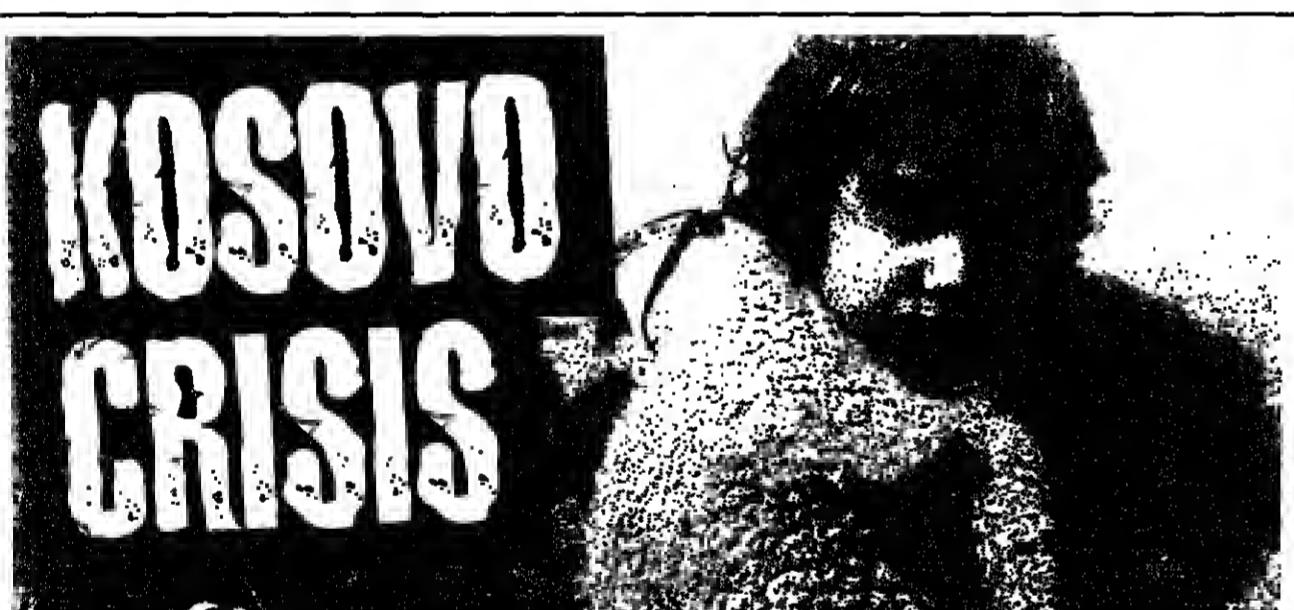
Food profits report request

THE GOVERNMENT was urged yesterday to allow the public to see if supermarkets were making unjustified profits. Tim Yeo, Tory Agriculture spokesman, called for the publishing of quarterly figures comparing farm gate and retail prices.

Last address

DONALD DEWAR addressed the Commons for the last time as Secretary of State for Scotland. Mr Dewar has made it clear he will seek to become Scotland's First Minister after the elections to the Holyrood Parliament on 6 May.

Today's agenda
Commons At 2.30pm
Northern Ireland questions. Prime Minister's questions.



Save the Children from Violence

The war in Kosovo shows only too clearly how conflict and violence can threaten children today. Over half the population of Kosovo is under 18, so this conflict is hitting the young particularly hard.

Save the Children has considerable experience of working in troubled regions. That's why we have launched our 'Save the Children from Violence' campaign - to change government policy and raise money to help all children affected by conflict.

Active in the Kosovo area since 1993, we have increased our efforts to respond to the current humanitarian crisis. Working in co-operation with other aid organisations, we

£15 helps buy emergency kits, which contain: windproof jackets, warm socks, soap, towels, nappies and baby food

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Bishops speak out for SNP policies

SCOTLAND'S ROMAN Catholic bishops yesterday indicated a clear preference for the policies of the Scottish National Party. A statement from the bishops, to be read out at every Catholic church on Sunday, represents a snub to Labour, traditionally the party of Scottish Catholics, and marks a new low point in relations with the Government.

In line with SNP policy, the Catholic hierarchy's document opposes Labour's introduction of university tuition fees and demands that "nuclear weapons are banished and resources re-targeted to our people's needs". In a side-swipe at Labour, which has moved to close Catholic schools in a number of areas, the document calls for legislators who will respect and support Catholic schools.

Although the bishops stop short of endorsing the SNP's decision to forgo the one penny Budget cut in income tax to fund public services, the bishops state: "Politicians must be prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that adequate funding is made available for the care of the sick and the elderly."

Eddie Barnes, editor of the *Scottish Catholic Observer*, a weekly religious newspaper, said: "Clearly some of the SNP policies are in accordance with what the Catholic church has been saying. There is some obvious crossover."

However, the 800-word statement stops short of actually endorsing the SNP, stating that "it is not our intention to advise electors which party or candidates they should favour".

Publication was delayed for a week after some senior clerics said the original was too party political. It is understood that the first draft was watered down to place the Catholic

BY JACK O'SULLIVAN
Scotland Correspondent

church equidistant between the nationalist and Unionist camps.

Moosignor Tom Connolly, a spokesman for the Catholic church in Scotland, said: "Catholic social teaching is Catholic social teaching. If some party's policies coincide with that, so much the better. The idea of the church being pro-SNP is absolute hunkum."

Cardinal Thomas Winning, leader of Scotland's Catholics, has made no secret of his sympathies for nationalism. At a conference of European bishops last year he said, to SNP delight, that Scottish nationalism was "mature, respectful of democracy and international in outlook". Before the 1992 general election, the then Archbishop Winning attacked Labour's pro-abortion policy.

Last night, the SNP welcomed the latest intervention from the Catholic bishops. An SNP spokesman said: "The fact that some of the bishops' views accord with SNP policy positions simply reflects the fact that those positions represent consensus opinion in Scotland." A Labour spokesman refused to comment.

Yesterday's development came after a statement sympathetic to nationalism from the Rev John Cairns, who next month takes over as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

Mr Cairns highlighted the General Assembly's long-standing support for devolution, and added: "If it transpired that the people of Scotland wanted something more, on the same basis the Church could well support that as well. The key thing is the wishes of the people of Scotland."

TONY BLAIR was under pressure last night to disclose details of a secret deal between Labour and the Liberal Democrats which could lead to a coalition in the new Scottish Parliament.

Alex Salmond, the Scottish National Party leader, wrote angry letters to both the Prime Minister and the Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, last night after senior Labour figures denied there was any deal.

A meeting in 1996, detailed in a new biography of Peter Mandelson by *The Independent's* chief political columnist, Donald Macintyre, thrashed out the bones of the agreement. Held at the home of the now Lord Chancellor, Derry Irvine, it also included Mr Blair, Mr Ashdown,

BY FRAN ABRAMS
AND JACK O'SULLIVAN

Robin Cook, Gordon Brown and the now Secretary of State for Scotland, Donald Dewar. Other senior Liberal Democrats present included Archy Kirkwood, MP for Roxburgh and Berwick, and Menzies Campbell, now Liberal Democrat foreign affairs and defence spokesman.

The book said the two parties also promised to strive to damage each other in the coming general election, and to work towards a coalition in Scotland if Labour failed to win a working majority in the elections for its new Parliament.

Pressed about the meeting yesterday, Mr Dewar refused to deny it had taken place. "I have not got an agreement with the

Liberal Democrats. If a meeting took place, certainly you can take it that as a result there is no agreement. I do not have a list in my back pocket of Liberal Democrats," he told Labour's press conference in Glasgow yesterday morning.

Some Labour aides predicted that there would be Liberal Democrat ministers in the new Parliament, though, while others suggested there would be opposition to the move from both Labour and Liberal Democrat members. Moves at Westminster to bring the Liberal Democrats and Labour closer together met with fierce opposition from some quarters.

Mr Salmond dismissed the deal as "deeply undemocratic". In letters to Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown, he demanded to

know whether Mr Macintyre's "impeccably sourced" book was wrong or whether Mr Dewar was failing to tell the whole truth. "The people of Scotland have a right to know what was decided at this secret London meeting in relation to the Scottish Parliament. Who is correct - Donald Macintyre or Donald Dewar?

"This is a major revelation which exposes the real mobilisation of London Labour and the Lib Dems in this campaign. They have tried to carve up the Scottish election campaign in London - on a cynical and negative anti-SNP agenda," he said.

The Conservatives also reacted angrily to the revelation. A party spokesman accused the Liberal Democrats of being

having like "concubines", favouring anyone who might advance their cause. "Heaven knows what was discussed. It looks as if they were trying to stitch up the Scottish elections. It is pretty vile to patronise the Scottish electorate like this and reveals a very Machiavellian approach to what was meant to be a refreshing election for Scotland," he said.

Mr Dewar had been repeatedly pressed for details of the meeting after reports that he might be prepared to oppose Mr Blair on the issue and refuse to form a coalition.

Yesterday the former Liberal leader, Lord (David) Steel of Aikwood, said a deal with Labour now looked most likely because it would almost certainly be the largest party.

Alex Salmond, SNP leader, canvassing Nancy Clarke (left) in Dunfermline yesterday as her friend avoids the glare of the cameras

PA

Blair under pressure to reveal Lib-Lab 'vote pact' for Scotland

TONY BLAIR was under pressure last night to disclose details of a secret deal between Labour and the Liberal Democrats which could lead to a coalition in the new Scottish Parliament.

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BY FRAN ABRAMS
AND JACK O'SULLIVAN

Robin Cook, Gordon Brown and the now Secretary of State for Scotland, Donald Dewar. Other senior Liberal Democrats present included Archy Kirkwood, MP for Roxburgh and Berwick, and Menzies Campbell, now Liberal Democrat foreign affairs and defence spokesman.

The book said the two parties also promised to strive to damage each other in the coming general election, and to work towards a coalition in Scotland if Labour failed to win a working majority in the elections for its new Parliament.

Pressed about the meeting yesterday, Mr Dewar refused to deny it had taken place. "I have not got an agreement with the

Liberal Democrats. If a meeting took place, certainly you can take it that as a result there is no agreement. I do not have a list in my back pocket of Liberal Democrats," he told Labour's press conference in Glasgow yesterday morning.

Some Labour aides predicted that there would be Liberal Democrat ministers in the new Parliament, though, while others suggested there would be opposition to the move from both Labour and Liberal Democrat members. Moves at Westminster to bring the Liberal Democrats and Labour closer together met with fierce opposition from some quarters.

Mr Salmond dismissed the deal as "deeply undemocratic". In letters to Mr Blair and Mr Ashdown, he demanded to

know whether Mr Macintyre's "impeccably sourced" book was wrong or whether Mr Dewar was failing to tell the whole truth. "The people of Scotland have a right to know what was decided at this secret London meeting in relation to the Scottish Parliament. Who is correct - Donald Macintyre or Donald Dewar?

"This is a major revelation which exposes the real mobilisation of London Labour and the Lib Dems in this campaign. They have tried to carve up the Scottish election campaign in London - on a cynical and negative anti-SNP agenda," he said.

The Conservatives also reacted angrily to the revelation. A party spokesman accused the Liberal Democrats of being

CAMPAIGNS BRIEFING

8 DAYS TO GO

IN SCOTLAND, Labour promised property reforms which would give communities the right to buy the land on which they live. The Liberal Democrats published a survey which, they said, showed Labour was not delivering on its health promises. Conservatives continued their attack on university tuition fees, publishing a Bill for their abolition which they said should be introduced in the first session of the Scottish Parliament.

LABOUR is on course to hold the marginal Monmouth seat. An NOP poll for the television company HTV gives Labour 40 per cent of the vote, the Tories 33 per cent, Lib Dems 10 per cent, Plaid Cymru 9 per cent and the "Monmouthshire candidate" 8 per cent.

TWO MILLIONAIRES have donated £100,000 to help the Scottish Tories. Sir Graham Kirkham and Lord Harris of Peckham each gave £50,000. Labour received £50,000 from the AEEU and £25,000 from the TGWU.

WELSH BAND The Manic Street Preachers have refused to allow one of their songs to be used by Labour in the assembly elections. It contains a quote from Aneurin Bevan: "This is my truth, tell me yours". Apparently the Manics' lyricist, Nicky Wire, is more Old than New Labour and is disgusted with the party's rightward shift.

"I THINK it's extraordinary in 1999 to think you can solve problems by bombing" - Alex Salmond, SNP leader.

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Barrister 'sweatshops' are outlawed

BARRISTER 'SWEATSHOPS'. where trainee barristers are paid nothing to do administrative work and make simple court applications, will have to change their practices, after a landmark legal opinion obtained by the Bar Council.

The opinion, given by three barristers – one a Queen's Counsel – has been sent to all heads of chambers. It makes it clear that all trainee barristers, known as pupils, are now sub-

BY ROBERT VERKAIK
Legal Affairs Correspondent

ject to the 1998 EU Working Time Regulations, while those over the age of 26 qualify for the national minimum wage.

As a significant proportion of barristers' pupils are over 26, the opinion will mean that chambers must pay pupils £3,000 a year. In the past they have paid them nothing. This practice, mainly restricted to

smaller sets of chambers, has obliged aspiring barristers to take unfunded pupillages.

Steve Doherty, a spokesman for the Bar Council, said that those chambers that did not comply with the guidance would be "flouting the law of the land" and that the Bar Council would take a "dim view of this".

He admitted that chambers adhering to the new laws might be forced to cut the number of pupils.

He said: "It's really very cheap skilled labour."

said Mr Doherty.

The opinion, given by Jere-

ny McMullen QC, Jennifer Eady and Sarah Moor, says that under the Working Time Regulations chambers must also give pupils three weeks' paid holiday. But it also says that chambers can enter into individual written agreements with pupils to "contract out" of the 38-hour week.

David Richmond passed his Bar exams in 1992 but after several attempts at finding a funded pupillage he was forced to

abandon his legal career and take a job as a waiter in the department store Harvey Nichols.

"I was paid much more as a waiter than I would have been as a pupil," said Mr Richmond.

"It came to a point when I had to decide how much longer I could continue living on the breadline." Mr Richmond, now a magistrates' court clerk, says that he blames the "sweatshop" mentality of some chambers for his inability to find a

pupillage. "There are dozens of talented trainee barristers without private incomes who have to sacrifice their career at the Bar because of money problems," he said.

Neil Savage, chief executive of the College of Law, said that he welcomed the opinion because it would force chambers to pay their pupils an honest wage for an honest day's work. "If they are not prepared to do that then they shouldn't take

them on in the first place," he said.

Georgina Kent, chairman of the Young Bar, said that she too welcomed the development: "It will make chambers think how they are going to award pupillages in the future."

She added that some chambers, mainly civil sets and the better-off criminal chambers, did already pay pupils the equivalent of the minimum wage during pupillage.



Tamarin Stott, of the City Ballet of London, preparing to dance in Leadenhall Market yesterday. The touring company, which was celebrating its move from Holborn to a new base at the financial heart of the City, starts a British tour with Wayne Sleep in June

Neville Elder

Heart disease in rapid decline

HEART DISEASE is falling so fast among men in the upper social classes that heart-attack deaths below retirement age are becoming a thing of the past, a leading epidemiologist said yesterday.

The single biggest killer of

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

men and women in the UK claims 150,000 lives a year, but the rate is falling by 4 per cent annually and is set to drop below 100,000 deaths within 25

years, according to a report by the National Heart Forum. Klim McPherson, professor of public health epidemiology at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said: "Men under 65 are eliminating the disease – it is going down fast. Social class 1 men are becoming almost risk-free."

The trend is also clear in women, though less dramatically. There is little difference in cholesterol levels between the upper and lower social classes – the main risk factor for heart disease – but the advantage enjoyed by the rich is believed to be because they eat more fruit and vegetables, smoke less, exercise more and have better medical care.

The rapid fall in heart disease rates among the rich shows what can be achieved when the risk factors are altered, experts from the forum, an alliance of 40

medical organisations, said yesterday. But they warned that progress in the UK was still too slow and the gap between the social classes was widening.

Speaking at the launch of a report, *Looking to the Future*, Gerald Shaper, emeritus professor of clinical epidemiology at the Royal Free Hospital in London, said Britain had been slower to recognise the importance of diet than other countries, such as the US and Australia, where death rates are 30 per cent lower than in the UK.

The composition of the diet is the fundamental factor making people susceptible to heart disease. All other factors, such as smoking and high blood pressure, are aggravating factors. The US moved to alter the diet a decade before Britain. We have been very reluctant to accept that it is a nutritional disease," he said.

Blunkett deplores Radio 4 standards

BBC RADIO 4 is full of second-rate drama and undergraduate humour, according to one of its lifelong fans and latest critic, David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education.

In an article, Mr Blunkett yesterday said Radio 4 had been his "window on the world". He even remembered dancing as a four-year-old with his mother to the signature tune of *The Archers*. Of radio drama, he said: "Until a year or two ago, there were superb productions coming from the beleaguered editorial and production staff, desperately clinging to high standards, realistic sound effects and top-class acting."

Now, however, that had changed. "I fear that a lifetime's pleasure is being replaced by second-rate and poorly produced dramas which try too hard to be clever and seem too often to reflect the need to meet a quota from independent production companies rather than a high standard of quality drama."

He went on to lambast a "new wave of comedy programmes which seem to reflect the worst standards of undergraduate humour". And he criticised new trailers for programmes: "They presume that we are jumping up and down clapping our hands while listening rather than being a part of an intelligent audience."

He urged Radio 4 to redress the balance between gentle entertainment and serious current affairs before the "real Radio 4" is lost for ever.

A BBC spokeswoman said: "It is a shame that David Blunkett seems to have missed the recent acclaimed productions of *Blank House* and *Wifete*... We hope he will manage to hear the very different styles of comedy in *Quote Unquote* and the new series *Yes, I Can Boogie*, written by and featuring able-bodied and disabled performers, as well as tuning in to the 1999 Reith lectures."

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British police may supervise East Timor elections

BY DIARMID O'SULLIVAN
in Bali

VIETNAM HAS asked for a British police presence when the people of East Timor vote in their political future on 8 August. Five other countries are being asked for police to help supervise the UN-backed vote, which may lead to East Timor's independence after 23 years of harsh Indonesian rule.

"The UK have the capabilities. They've always shown interest in the country and the region and they have accumulated experience all around the

world," Indonesia's President BJ Habibie said yesterday.

The other five countries are Australia - whose Prime Minister, John Howard, met Mr Habibie yesterday - the United States, Japan, the Philippines and Germany.

It is not yet clear how many police officers will be needed. There are more than 400 villages in East Timor, many in re-

mote mountain valleys, and some diplomats have suggested that up to half a dozen foreign police might be needed for each one.

The officers would have an advisory role, helping Indonesian police to manage the voting. In practice, they will be there to see that East Timorese supporters of continued Indonesian rule do not try to thwart the vote through terrorism and violence. It is not clear whether the officers will be armed,

though it appears unlikely. Dozens, possibly hundreds, of East Timorese have been killed by loyalist militias this year. The militias have been given a free rein by Indonesian officers opposed to independence, and reports of fresh killings filter out daily.

The loyalists suspect they will be targets for retribution once Jakarta pulls out.

The request for British police officers for East Timor surprised the Foreign Office min-

ister Derek Fatchett when he flew to the Indonesian island of Bali yesterday for a meeting with Mr Habibie. "We only heard about it this afternoon. We have started to discuss some of the details with the president," he said.

However, Mr Fatchett said Britain was willing to help. "There are a number of details we have to work on: first of all, the security issues, the police involved and what is needed. The function we're talking

about, and it's very important to recognise this, is a police function. It's not a peace-keeping force," he said.

Mr Fatchett is due to fly to East Timor today to meet local leaders on the first visit by a British minister. Like many Western countries, Britain has started to take an interest in the territory after years of turning a blind eye to reports of Indonesian atrocities.

Indonesia and Portugal - the former colonial power in

foreign police, and it will be signed on 5 May. Australia, which has offered to pay roughly half of the cost of the vote, wants the police to go in by the end of May.

Britain and Australia are presenting Mr Habibie's statement as a breakthrough.

"We have got the green light to go through to the ballot," Mr Fatchett said. Mr Habibie has "the power, responsibility and wish" to see the East Timor problem solved peacefully.

Arafat fails to set date for independence

BY PATRICK COCKBURN
in Gaza

YASSER ARAFAT, the Palestinian leader, backed away yesterday from declaring an independent state next month at a meeting of Palestinian leaders in Gaza.

He is under pressure from the US not to declare Palestinian independence and he does not want to do anything to help Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, to win re-election on 4 May.

Mr Arafat told some 100 members of the Central Council of the Islamic movement Hamas, and three of his senior lieutenants attended the closed session of the Central Council as observers. They said all negotiations with Israel should be broken off.

In recent months Mr Arafat has relied almost wholly on international pressure as a lever on Mr Netanyahu, but without demonstrable effect.

Nabil Shaath, one of his senior aides, said that in many ways the Palestinians already had an independent state in Gaza, but "it is a state under siege".

This siege can be lifted only by agreement with Israel and not a unilateral declaration of independence by the Palestinians, which would not change the facts on the ground. In the past six months Israel has built 12 new settlements on the West Bank, despite expressions of American displeasure.

Workers in Gaza can get into Israel only after stringent security checks. The head of the Israeli prison at Erez, one of the main checkpoints, was suspended this week after an Israeli army investigation.

Mr Barghouti said he

started by a soldier's complaint, revealed that Palestinian workers in detention were beaten, humiliated and denied medical attention.

The Central Council meeting in Gaza is likely to adjourn until after the Israeli elections, which Mr Arafat hopes Mr Netanyahu loses. This also enables the Palestinian leader to use the threat of a declaration of independence as a lever on the US to become involved in negotiations with Israel.

Mr Netanyahu claims his toughness prevents the Palestinians claiming statehood. He said yesterday that Mr Arafat "knows that as long as I am prime minister of Israel, such a state, with Jerusalem as its capital, will not be established".

A central theme of the Israeli prime minister's election campaign is that he has stopped suicide bomb attacks, made Israelis feel safer but has made few concessions to the Palestinians. He had threatened to formally annex parts of the West Bank if the Palestinians declare an independent state.

The Israeli opposition One Israel party has accused Mr Netanyahu of brokering a "honeymoon" in relations between Mr Arafat and the US. But the Israeli leader may calculate that with a US presidential election he has little to fear with pressure from Washington.

There were momentary fears that the bombers had returned yesterday when a car blew up in Rishon LeZion outside Tel Aviv yesterday, killing a child and injuring three people. Police suspect the motive was criminal, not political.

Yasser Arafat greets supporters at his meeting in Gaza yesterday

German denies shooting 500 Jews

BY FRANZ-NORBERT PIONTEK
in Stuttgart

A SUSPECTED Nazi war criminal said at the start of his trial yesterday that he felt sick watching concentration camp guards shoot hundreds of Jews in the head, but denied he ever pulled a trigger himself.

Alois Goetzfrid, a former Soviet citizen, is charged by German prosecutors with aiding the Nazi massacre of 17,000 Jews during the Second World War and of having shot 500 people himself.

"I had to load the machine-guns with magazines, and loaded other pistols. But that was it," he told the Stuttgart state court. "The victims were shot from behind and they screamed, moaned and cried. It made me sick."

Goetzfrid, an ethnic German who was born and lived in the Soviet Union until 1991 before emigrating after the collapse of Communism, spent a year in investigative custody before being released in March, pending the outcome of the trial. The state prosecutor Kurt Schrimm said the court had decided to free him on bail as it did not think he would try to evade justice.

Goetzfrid volunteered for the German army after it overran Soviet Ukraine in 1941, and originally looked after horses and worked as a translator before joining the Gestapo in Lvov in 1943. Many non-Russian nationalists and anti-Communists joined the invading German forces to fight Moscow's Red Army.

He admits to having worked for the Gestapo, and spent 13 years in a Soviet labour camp in the Arctic after the war. Officials say that will count towards any sentence in Germany, ensuring that he will spend little, if any, more time in jail. The maximum term he faces is 15 years.

On his release from labour camp, Goetzfrid lived in what is now independent Kazakhstan, to where Stalin deported many of the ethnic Germans who had lived in Russia since Tsarist times. Many of them have resettled in Germany since 1991.

Goetzfrid came to the attention of the authorities when he gave testimony in 1997 to prosecutors investigating another war crimes suspect.

The prosecution said that despite later denials, Goetzfrid had admitted in pre-trial investigations that, when a member of the Gestapo, he shot 500 Jewish men, women and children in November 1943 at the Majdanek camp in Poland in a two-day massacre dubbed Operation Harvest Festival.

Goetzfrid, who wore a dark sweater and appeared frail, is also charged with assisting the murder of 17,000 Jews around Lublin in Poland and Lvov in Ukraine in 1942 and 1943. (Reuters)

Clinton takes on the gun lobby

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

ABDELAZZIZ BOUTEFLIKA was sworn in as President of Algeria yesterday. Mr Bouteflika, a former foreign minister, was the only candidate in the election on 15 April and the ceremony was boycotted by opposition groups, who have accused the military of rigging the polls.

Nanny denies child abuse charges
A NANNY who was allegedly filmed kicking and hitting the two children in her care could face up to 20 years in prison. Joan Kahn, 55, appeared in a court in Norwalk, Connecticut, to plead not guilty to charges of abuse.

Racism ends German book tour
A PRIZE-WINNING African author, Amma Darko, called off a book tour in Germany after youths in the eastern town of Schwerin, an island resort, shouted racist insults and spat a beer bottle at her during her first reading.

Florida warns of alligator threat
FLORIDA'S ONE million alligators are on the prowl for mates and food, posing a threat to people and pets, state wildlife officials said yesterday. Several alligators have been seen walking by ponds and on a golf course recently.

PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON used public anger over the Colorado school shootings to push for more restrictions on guns yesterday. Although the legislative plan he proposed has fragile hopes for survival, the White House was able to use the occasion to put further pressure on the National Rifle Association (NRA), the main lobbyists for both gun owners and manufacturers.

"The NRA and other pro-gun organisations need to support the administration's efforts ... to put reasonable regulations on the use and the possession of guns," said Deputy Attorney General Holder over the weekend.

The President wants to extend a law requiring background checks on gun

purchasers to those who buy explosives. He was also preparing to propose making parents liable for their children's crimes, raising the legal age for handgun possession from 18 to 21, making child safety locks on guns mandatory, and toughening the laws on gun shows.

The NRA has run into increasing trouble in the last few years as it has gained a reputation for right-wing extremism. While Washington may still be home ground for the NRA, it is losing battles elsewhere at state level. One of its main efforts over the last few years has been to get laws passed to permit the carrying of concealed weapons, but a vote in Missouri on the issue went against it earlier this month.

It has also become estranged from some of the gun manufacturers, who fear that its reputation for right-wing extremism may not be particularly useful in helping them tackle legal and political challenges.

Seven cities are currently suing several of the gun manufacturers.

The NRA came under heavy criticism in the wake of the school killings in Denver. It agreed to the wishes of local officials and cut back most of its programme from three days to one, leaving only the formal annual business. But it would not stop the meeting completely, even though the city agreed to pay its costs. "We have an obligation to our members," said a spokesman for the NRA.

The city insisted that it did not want any NRA presence at all. "We don't want them here," said Allegra Haynes, the president of Denver City Council.

Meanwhile, it emerged that the 18-year-old girlfriend of Columbine High School gunman Dylan Klebold apparently bought at least two of the weapons used in the attack at a Denver-area gun show.

Investigators were also checking a report from a Colorado Springs gun dealer that the other gunman, Eric Harris, was among five teenagers who tried to buy a machine gun and another weapon last month.

It was reported that investigators believe the girlfriend bought three weapons not long after her 18th birthday in November.

(Reuters)

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Jeffrey Katzenberg flanked by David Geffen (left) and Steven Spielberg, founders of DreamWorks, which Mr Katzenberg left Disney to join AP

Bitter enemies battle over Disney bonus deal

THE GLOVES have come off and the prize fight has begun. Michael Eisner and Jeffrey Katzenberg, two of Hollywood's bitterest, and most powerful, enemies, began slugging out their differences in open court yesterday, turning a long-running contract dispute into a personal slanging match that risks exposing low intrigue and perverted ambition at the heart of the Walt Disney Company.

Mr Katzenberg, who now runs the new studio DreamWorks with his friends Steven Spielberg and David Geffen, is suing Disney for at least \$250m (£156m), arguing that the company deliberately tried to cheat him out of a lucrative bonus deal after he stepped down as its studio head in 1994.

Mr Eisner, Disney's chief executive officer, has conceded

BY ANDREW GUMBLE
in Los Angeles

that the company owes Mr Katzenberg something but appears determined to fight him down to the last dime rather than admit defeat.

And that is just the polite version of their relationship, which has soured so badly that each can barely stand to mention the other in public.

In his opening remarks on Monday, Mr Katzenberg's lawyer, Bert Fields, accused Mr Eisner of seeking to punish his former studio head out of "personal animosity". He said Mr Eisner and two of his Disney colleagues had conspired to cheat Mr Katzenberg out of a 2 per cent cut of the profit on all projects he had originated, and even nicked

named their plan Operation Snowball.

"Each story [the three Disney executives] told is patently untrue. I don't say that lightly," Mr Fields charged.

On the other side, Disney's lawyer, Louis Meisinger, accused Mr Katzenberg of hogging the credit for successful projects, failing to treat Roy Disney, son of the legendary Walt, with due respect, and attempting to portray himself as a victim when in fact he had received \$100m in compensation in his 10 years with the company, including bonuses, stock options and a \$5m beach house.

Mr Katzenberg set "a new standard for arrogance in an industry that already has a high mark in this area," Mr Meisinger said.

The public vilifications were expected to intensify yesterday as Mr Katzenberg took the stand. He appears hell-bent to throw Mr Eisner every punch he has. on the basis that the more he can embarrass Disney the faster he will clinch a settlement.

The public airing of the court case is a victory for Mr Katzenberg. Mr Eisner battled long and hard to keep the media out, and is still doing his best to withhold court documents from the public record.

Once, Mr Eisner was best friend with Mr Katzenberg and personally hired him to Disney in 1984. Mr Katzenberg rapidly turned an anaemic film division into a roaring success, reviving the moribund animation division to produce such hits as *The Lion King*, *Beauty* and *the Beast*, *Aladdin*, and

and the Beast, *Aladdin*, and

The Disney board were reluctant, however, to award Mr Katzenberg a lucrative stock option deal because they had already given as much as they could afford to Mr Eisner and his number two, Frank Wells.

The 2 per cent bonus deal was seen as the next best thing, a potentially enormous benefit

since it applied to the revenue of Disney products – films, videos and toys – in perpetuity.

The rift came in 1994, when

Mr Eisner refused to promote Mr Katzenberg to the number two slot, vacated after Frank Wells died in an accident. Mr Katzenberg cut his contract short to join DreamWorks – a gesture Disney interpreted as a forfeit on his bonus. They have been arguing about it ever since.

FOREIGN NEWS/13

Literary lions praise Chandler's grim city

AMERICAN TIMES
LOS ANGELES

THINK LITERATURE, and chances are you won't think of Los Angeles. The Chicago of Saul Bellow, yes; the New England of Updike and Irving, certainly. But isn't LA the city of superficial, semi-literate airheads too dumb and too mercenary to take their eyes off the movies long enough to actually read anything?

That, give me take an idle prejudice, has certainly been the prevailing view of the New York literary mafia for as long as anyone can remember. In Los Angeles, novels are what unemployed screenwriters write to pass the time, not serious artistic endeavours, according to the East Coast literati. LA might be good for genre fiction, such as crime or noir or exposés of the Hollywood system, but it doesn't produce literature with a capital L.

That perception might explain why a certain defensiveness surrounded Los Angeles's literary finest as they gathered for a two-day Festival of Books at the University of California last weekend. The *LA Times*, one of the sponsors of the event, even held a forum entitled "LA Lit – Does it Exist?" One of the more waggish features of the

more

idle editors (with a few noteworthy exceptions) tend to gravitate toward that which is familiar and comforting to them – ie the Westside, where all the Eastern expatriates live," said Hector Tobar, whose debut novel *The Tattooed Soldier*, published last year, is a gripping

thriller.

Chandler: A pillar of American letters

of the horrors of the Guatemalan civil war spilling over into the melting pot of southern California during the 1992 riots. "These days, we Los Angeles readers get a daily diet of their *Catskills*, their Brooklyn and their Bronx. But how much do they really know about our Picoima, our Crenshaw District, our vast and varied Eastside?"

Since the big Los Angeles population boom early in the century, the city has been a fascinating inspiration for dark, near-apocalyptic literature that focuses on the corruption and swirling incongruities of the sprawling metropolis itself. Noir was virtually invented here, a genre that started out as pulp fiction and became a cornerstone of American literature. Resurrected authors include John Fante, a true poet-maudit who was Charles Bukowski's literary mentor; the black noir writer Chester Himes (especially *If He Hollers Let Him Go*), and John Rechy, author of the extraordinary homosexual drifter novel *City of Night*.

The LA of these books could not be further from the beautiful people and ditzy superficiality of the Westside. Novels like Tobar's *The Tattooed Soldier* combine Chandler-esque back-street poetry with the gritty experience that comes of immigration from desperate corners of the earth.

Los Angeles is remarkably good at throwing up little nuggets of poetic insight into itself. The Eastside poet Marisel Norte described seeing posters of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Cesar Chavez, the California farmworkers' leader, on a wall in a poor neighbourhood. A Mexican *jacqueria* opposite responded with the slogan: "One cause, one people, one *taco*."

Now that's poetry.

ANDREW GUMBLE

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Self publishing is fun, it is rewarding and (if you know how to do it) it can be profitable. I am so enthusiastic that I have just completed a book containing all the "inside" information and secrets I've gathered over the years.

Called *How To Publish Your Own Book* my new book explains in detail:

- Why you should publish your own book
- How to turn your words into a book
- How to sell your book
- How to maximise your profits. There are chapters explaining how to get your novel, autobiography, self-help book, history book or whatever it is book printed, and answers to questions such as:
- How many should I print?
- Should I print paperback or hardback?
- How do I promote and sell my book?

The book is packed with information telling you exactly what to do – and what not to do. It even covers things like packing and posting books to your customers, as well as selling rights to magazines and foreign agents.

And there are notes on writing fiction and non-fiction books.

If you want to publish your own book (and sell lots of copies and make a profit) then I think you'll find this book invaluable. But don't take my word for it. Have a look yourself and make up your own mind. And if the book isn't what you'd hoped for then just return it to me within 28 days and I'll refund your money.

But I know it will be just what you need – because I know I wish I could have read something just like it when I started out. It would have saved me lots of time and money.

Sharing Secrets

"Why are you planning to give away all your inside knowledge?" asked an astonished friend when he heard about this new book.

The answer was simple and easy, and I didn't even have to think about it.

I love books. I love writing them. I love reading them. And now I love publishing them. I want to share everything I have learned with others who also love books and writing. By reading my book I think you can also share in my success. Self publishing is not a last resort – it is the best way to publish a book today.

To order your own copy of *How To Publish Your Own Book* send a cheque or postal order for £4.95 to Sales Office, PB1, Publishing House, Trinity Place, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 9HJ. To pay by credit card you can call our 24 hour Orderline on 01271 328892 (your call will be answered by a real person – not by a machine!).

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BRIEFING

Inside BUSINESS REVIEW today

- New lease of Liffe: The man who brought hope to London futures
- Welsh wizard has Sony under his spell
- How Lara Croft made a man of Charles Cornwall
- The brewer's brewer

PLUS Hamish McRae, Diane Coyle, Derek Pain, Jonathan Davis and The Trader

First free Net service in France

KINGFISHER, the Woolworths and B&Q retail group, is linking up with the French entrepreneur and LVMH chairman Bernard Arnault to offer the first free Internet access service in France.

In an attempt to mimic the success of Dixons' Freeserve service in the UK, Kingfisher will offer free Internet access discs through its 137-strong chain of Darty electrical stores in France.

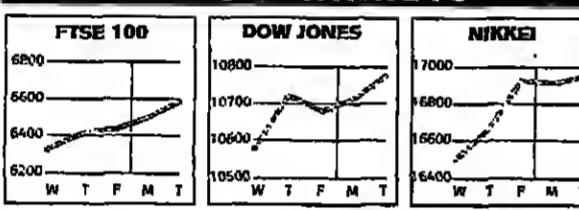
Subscribers to the LibertySurf service will be able to buy goods from Darty and Kingfisher's Castorama DIY chain. Group Arnault, the family holding company of Mr Arnault, will provide offers on luxury goods brands such as Louis Vuitton and Chanel. Only 4 per cent of French households are connected to the Internet, compared with 12 per cent in the UK. Kingfisher shares rose 5 per cent to 882p.

Amazon in £390m expansion

AMAZON.COM, the rapidly growing Internet bookseller, is paying £390m for three Internet companies including Exchange.com, a site for rare books and music.

Separately, yesterday Amazon launched a free greeting card service that is expected to boost the number of visitors to its site. Amazon.com Cards offers more than 800 styles of cards free.

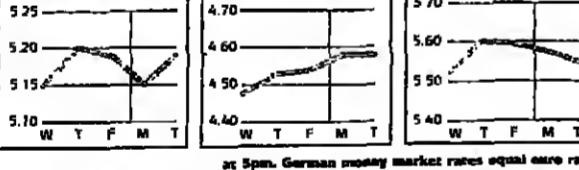
STOCK MARKETS



News Jones Index and graph at 5pm

Index	Close	Change	Change %	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	6593.60	90.00	1.36	6539.90	4599.20	2.40
FTSE 250	5808.70	20.10	0.35	5970.90	4240.20	2.98
FTSE 350	3139.00	37.90	1.22	3110.80	2210.40	2.49
FTSE All Share	3032.1	35.49	1.18	3010.25	2143.93	2.52
FTSE SmallCap	2542.40	8.50	0.34	2793.80	1834.40	4.08
FTSE MidCap	1383.70	6.30	0.46	1917.10	1046.20	3.37
FTSE AIM	937.80	8.50	0.92	1146.90	761.30	1.07
FTSE Eurotop 100	3064.08	49.41	1.64	3079.27	2018.15	1.82
FTSE Eurotop 300	1327.70	20.18	1.54	1332.07	880.83	1.86
FTSE	10765.59	60.42	0.56	10765.74	7400.30	1.49
Nikkei	16952.27	58.76	0.23	17166.06	12787.90	0.74
Hang Seng	13364.79	237.77	1.81	13364.42	6542.79	2.61
Dax	5347.50	91.28	1.74	5217.85	3833.25	2.25
S&P 500	1358.28	-0.03	-0.02	1363.70	1243.15	2.72
Nasdaq	2612.45	-39.95	-1.51	2661.10	12570.29	0.72
Toronto 300	7048.00	-3.98	-0.06	7048.00	5320.30	1.46
Brazil Bovespa	10750.54	-69.40	-0.64	11026.67	4754.89	3.20
Belgium Bel20	3257.20	13.19	0.41	3232.21	2266.26	1.99
Amsterdam Aex	374.41	8.63	2.35	500.65	365.58	1.00
France CAC 40	43909.92	180.52	0.34	4416.00	2891.21	1.67
Milan MIB30	36915.90	743.00	2.05	39170.00	24175.00	1.10
Madrid Ibex 35	10065.90	16.20	0.16	10268.80	6869.99	1.78
Irish Overall	5215.51	17.06	0.32	5454.25	3732.57	1.45
Korea Comp	793.98	17.68	2.26	780.73	277.57	0.67
Australia ASX	3145.20	15.50	0.50	3134.50	2386.70	2.97

INTEREST RATES



at 5pm, German money market rates equal ours rates

MONTH	3 month	1 Year	10 Year	Long bond
UK	5.33	-2.17	5.37	-2.07
US	5.00	-0.69	5.27	-0.64
Japan	0.14	-0.48	0.20	-0.45
Germany	2.59	-1.06	2.67	-1.26

MONEY MARKET RATES

Index	3 month	1 Year	10 Year	Long bond
UK	5.33	-2.17	5.37	-2.07
US	5.00	-0.69	5.27	-0.64
Japan	0.14	-0.48	0.20	-0.45

BOND YIELDS

Index	3 month	1 Year	10 Year	Long bond
UK	5.33	-2.17	5.37	-2.07
US	5.00	-0.69	5.27	-0.64
Japan	0.14	-0.48	0.20	-0.45
Germany	2.59	-1.06	2.67	-1.26

CURRENCIES

\$/E	1.620	1.525	1.515

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Murdoch caught by the Internet bug

AS IS usually the case in the less than transparent world of Rupert Murdoch's business affairs, we may never know the full story of Mark Booth's abrupt departure as chief executive of BSkyB. However, there are a number of reasons for thinking the official version - that he is off to spearhead Mr Murdoch's assault on the Internet - may be reasonably close to the truth.

Mr Murdoch has three good reasons for feeling less than happy with Mr Booth. He's already blamed Mr Booth's predecessor, Sam Chisholm, for Sky's failure to obtain regulatory approval for its Manchester Unit takeover; the way Mr Murdoch sees it, Mr Chisholm's combative style rubbed the regulators so much up the wrong way that they were bound to be poisoned against Sky. But Mr Booth was the man who fronted the bid and Sky's fruitless attempt to get it past the MMC, so he cannot be seen as entirely blameless.

Another is the less than spectacular launch of Sky Digital. Off to a slow and plodding start, Sky has failed to deliver the early knock-out blow to ONdigital Mr Murdoch hoped for. And a third is Sky's failure to gain any kind of a foothold in continental pay TV. In truth, this lat-



OUTLOOK

ter setback may have more to do with Mr Murdoch himself than Mr Booth, but a good boss never blames himself, does he.

For all of these reasons, Mr Murdoch might have thought the time right for a replacement. All the same, this doesn't appear to be a Murdoch axing in the old style. What is interesting about this changeover is that the choice of successor is not to be Mr Murdoch's alone, or that's the spin Sky is giving to the whole thing, anyway. As far as we know, this is the first time independent directors have had any kind of a proper say in the future of Sky's management, which hitherto has been run as if a wholly-owned

subsidiary of Mr Murdoch's News Corp.

Furthermore, Mr Booth isn't leaving the Murdoch fold. As many former Murdoch executives can testify, it is usual practice in the Murdoch empire to be shifted into some sort of departure lounge job before being exited entirely, and that may indeed be Mr Booth's eventual fate. Even so, it does seem genuinely to have been the case that Mr Booth received an offer from Bill Gates at Microsoft, and Mr Murdoch made an effort to keep him by constructing a similar post within his own company.

That effort, moreover, seems to be coming at a high price. Even for Mr Murdoch, \$300m of risk equity is hardly chicken-feed, and the Silicon Valley venture capital market, which seems to be where Mr Booth and the money are heading, is already an overcrowded one. Mr Murdoch's interest in the Net is quite a specialist one - interactive digital TV - but even so, he's late into the game. He's also on record as saying Internet companies are hugely overvalued and that the web will end up destroying more companies than it creates.

Which possibly explains why Mr Murdoch has to play the Internet

game, however expensive it proves in the short run. Any company with global media pretensions going forward has to have a stake in the Internet, for defensive reasons if no other. The Internet is not just an alternative means of distribution, it also threatens to gobble up a very significant share of worldwide advertising revenues. Whether Mr Booth was pushed or jumped, Mr Murdoch certainly needs somebody to bolster its Internet ambitions.

cent at the beginning of the decade.

And looking ahead, there is little reason to expect any reversal of the sector's well-established decline.

What does all this mean for poli-

cy? Clearly, the smaller the manu-

facturing sector becomes, the less

able it is to exert influence - either

directly or indirectly - over the level

of interest and exchange rates.

In this sense, the decline of UK manu-

facturing has become a vicious

downward spiral. Interest rate poli-

cy in this country is largely deter-

mined by our relatively large, and

relatively buoyant, services sector.

Manufacturers have for many

months been stuck with an interest

rate - and with an exchange rate -

that is far too high for their own good

and is primarily intended to curb a

services boom.

The Bank of England's interest

rate stance has merely served to

catalyse the pace of manufacturing

decline and, in turn, to diminish

further manufacturers' influence

over policy.

Given that manufacturing is in the

main - although not entirely - based

in the north, and that services - in

particular Britain's rapidly growing

financial services sector - tend to be

based in the south, the effect of all

this will be to widen the north-south divide.

Eddie George, the Bank of England governor, strongly maintains that he was misquoted by a northern regional newspaper which reported him as saying that northern jobs were a price worth paying for keeping inflation down in the south.

Unfortunately, that is the truth of how the Bank of England interest rate policy works. Indeed, if the Bank is to meet successfully the Government's inflation target, it is the only way its interest rate policy can work. If Eddie George thinks he gets flak from manufacturers in the North-east now, he should just give it a year or two.

Sir Dennis again

MRS SCHMOOZER has done it again. Often described as the Renaissance man of business, Sir Dennis Stevenson has picked up another chairmanship, and like the last one, Pearson, this one's a biggie - Halifax. No-one really knows if Sir Dennis is any good; he's never really managed anything, but one thing is for sure: he certainly gets around. Sir Dennis is the archetype of that

modern breed of person who deliberately divides his time between a large number of jobs, which is nice work if you can get it. Besides the chairman of Pearson, he's also chairman of GPA, a non-executive director of BSkyB, where he has been charged with finding a replacement for Mark Booth. Manpower, Lazardus, *the Economist*, St James' Place Capital and sometime adviser to the Prime Minister, Tony Blair Phew! With that lot already on the books, it is not clear what time he'll have left for Halifax.

It is arguably a good thing for a chairman to have a broad spread of interests and expertise, and no-one can quarrel with the performance of Pearson since he took the chair. But a portfolio of this size may be stretching the point a little too far.

Halifax shares have had a good run of late, bouncing back to close to their all time high. The company is solid, big, sturdy and in most respects runs itself. It doesn't seem to require a hands-on chairman, so in this respect, Sir Dennis could be perfect for the job. But with its core business - mortgages - mature and declining, it possibly does need a visionary. Is Sir Dennis that man? We'll see.

IMF faces fresh pressure for internal reform

FRESH PRESSURE for internal reform of the International Monetary Fund has built up at this week's meetings of the Fund and the World Bank in Washington.

The spring cleaning could result in the departure of Michel Camdessus as managing director of the IMF before its annual meetings at the end of September.

The meeting of the Fund's Interim Committee - in effect its supervisory board - also expressed concern about the state of the world economy.

Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, said: "Serious challenges remain and I believe the balance of risks for the global economy remain on the downside."

Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, said that although some earlier worries had not materialised, there was a "workman-like" approach to the challenges.

The Interim Committee discussed proposals for its own restructuring yesterday. Although there is no consensus about specific measures yet, the reforms will make the IMF more accountable to a broader range

BY DIANE COYLE

in Washington

of member countries, especially the developing countries.

It has already been agreed that in future the president of the World Bank will attend IMF Interim Committee meetings. Other measures that will give the committee, currently not much more than a talking shop on the international scene, greater influence over Fund decisions are likely.

The dissatisfaction with the Fund's handling of the world financial and economic crisis over the past two years was reflected in the communiqué issued by the Group of 24, a grouping of developing nations.

It urged greater flexibility in IMF policy prescriptions and emphasised "the need for developing countries to have an equitable representation" in the process of crisis management.

Ministers from the emerging economies have also expressed concern about the pressure on them to publish IMF assessments of their economies. The need for greater transparency is at the core of the G24's pro-

posals for international reform, but the G24 warned: "Publication of Fund staff surveillance reports is likely to compromise the quality and candour of discussions with member countries."

The reports could help trigger crises if they moved the financial markets adversely. At the very least, the IMF will have to improve its own record on transparency and accountability as its senior echelons acknowledge.

Mr Brown reaffirmed the importance of greater transparency. In his remarks to the Interim Committee he also said growth in the UK would be slower this year than last but would strengthen into 2000.

Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the EU's monetary affairs commissioner, said the euro's depreciation against the dollar had been "relatively modest" and the result of slower growth, adding, "even if there is room for an appreciation of the euro".

Kiichi Miyazawa, Japan's finance minister, defended his government's economic policy, saying it was responding "forcefully" to difficult conditions.



Alan Greenspan (left), chairman of the US Federal Reserve, and Robert Rubin, US Treasury Secretary, at the IMF meeting in Washington yesterday Ron Edmonds

Lloyds TSB launches low-interest credit cards

LLOYD'S TSB went on the offensive in the credit-card price war yesterday when it launched a range of cards with interest rates as low as 15.9 per cent APR, writes Andrew Verity.

The high street bank is abolishing annual fees on the new credit cards, called Asset, and

charging a maximum interest rate of 18.9 per cent APR. Rates fall to 15.9 per cent on balances over £1,000 and the cards carry benefits such as free warranties and travel insurance.

Lloyds TSB has seen its share of credit-card lending shrink from 17 to 15 per cent in

the past three years as US competitors have lured customers away with lower rates.

The move undercuts Barclaycard, the traditional market leader, which has also lost market share to US competitors. The American competition - with rates as low as 11 or 12 per cent

ising by over 20 per cent a year for three to four years."

Mark Austin, of RBS Advanced Payments, criticised Lloyds TSB for leaving existing customers, who hold the Lloyds Bank Classic Reserve Card, stranded on a rate of 19.9 per cent - up to 4 points higher than the new rates.

Notice to TSB Trustcard and Trustcard Control Customers

TSB is changing its interest rates for TSB Trustcard and TSB Trustcard Control customers.

With effect from 1st May 1999 the interest rates on TSB Trustcard are as follows:

	MONTHLY RATE	APR (PURCHASES)	APR (CASH ADVANCES)
Outstanding Balance	1.63%	21.4%	23.2%
£1-£1,499	1.60%	20.9%	22.8%
£1,500-£2,999	1.38%	17.8%	19.6%
£3,000 or more*			

*This rate remains unchanged.

Balance Transfer rates

Amount Transferred	0.94%	11.8%	13.5%
£250-£1,499	0.79%	9.9%	11.5%
£1,500 and over			

With effect from 1st May 1999 the interest rates on TSB Trustcard Control are as follows:

1.63%	21.4%	23.2%
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Part of the Lloyds TSB Group

Diageo to sell off Cinzano

DIAGEO, the drinks group, yesterday put four of its European spirits brands up for sale in a move that could net more than £300m.

The brands include Cinzano, the high-profile vermouth that is number two in its category worldwide.

Also included in the proposed sale are Metaxa, the popular Greek spirit, Asbach brandy and Vecchia Romagna, Italy's best-selling brandy.

Diageo has instructed Warburg Dillon Read to draw up a memorandum for sale to see whether the disposal would be value enhancing for shareholders.

The four brands made an annual profits contribution of £60m after marketing and promotion. Some analysts say the sale could yield up to £350m.

These four are low quality brands and a sale would complete the rationalisation of Diageo's spirits brands fol-

lowing the GrandMet-Guinness merger," one analyst said.

In a separate statement

Diageo said its UDV spirits division will sell four brands of the Greek aniseed spirit ouzo to the Italian drinks maker Gruppo Campari for an undisclosed price.

The moves form part of UDV's strategy to focus its resources on building major growth brands such as Johnnie Walker and J&B scotch whiskies, Smirnoff vodka, Gordon's gin and Baileys liqueur, following deals in North America earlier this year.

Diageo shares closed 30p higher at 718.5p. The stock was boosted by one investment bank yesterday recommending investors to switch into Diageo from rival spirits group Allied Domecq, which reports results tomorrow.

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GEC the star as market soars to a new peak

BLUE-CHIPS climbed to a new all-time peak yesterday, buoyed by a soaring Wall Street and by persistent talk of domestic mega-mergers.

The bulls took control of the FTSE 100 from the word go, and by lunchtime the leading index was already sporting a three-figure gain. The rally continued in the early afternoon, spurred by a strong start in the Dow. The positive winds coming from across the pond and a shortage of leading stocks helped the FTSE 100 to record its intra-day peak of 6,635.9 and then to smash its closing record, finishing 90 points higher at 6,592.6.

Dealers reported a steady flow of buying and said that some sizeable orders from overseas helped turnover to break through the one billion-share barrier. However, some market players cautioned that this latest push towards the 6,600 threshold could run into

IS A big retailer preparing to bid for Shipton Group?

The small Isle of Man-based property and supermarket company rose 1.25p to 22.25p yesterday after buying back 500,000 shares at 21p. There are rumours that the buyback was a defensive move and that the board has received an approach north of 21p from a large chain.

A forthcoming Annual General Meeting should help to clear the air. The shares were 39.75p two years ago.

profit-taking later in the week.

The day was marked by several gravity-defying performances, but GEC stole the show. The restructuring telecom company soared 51.5p to an all-time high of 660p, as brokers rushed to praise Monday's purchase of the US Internet equipment company, FORE. Old market hands searched their memories for a similar jump in GEC's shares and had to admit that rarely in the company's long history had there been so much enthusiasm for its strategy.

In the market's eyes, the sale of Marconi to British Aerospace, confirmed yesterday, means that GEC has shed the unappealing tag of defence stock and should be rated as a high-growth, high-TEC telecom stock. The excitement was also fed by rumours that GEC is lining up another big deal. It was a shame that some of GEC's new-found peers ran into profit-taking.

Cable & Wireless, the takeover flavour of the month, lost 21.5p to 887.5p after news that an acquisition in Australia may be blocked by regulators. Cable & Wireless Communications followed its parent, slumping 16p to 71.1p as dealers reaped the rewards of a good run. It would be merger partner Telewest Communications suffered the same fate, ending 1.5p off to 295.75p. BT was an exception, rising 42p to 1,089p on talk of an imminent restructuring of its debt.

COLT shot 38p higher to

MARKET REPORT
FRANCESCO GUERRERA

1.184p amid vague rumours of a bid. Takeover speculation supported Allied Irish Banks. The shares picked up 18.5p to 1,019p on renewed talk of a strike by Lloyds TSB, up 16.5p to 997.5p. Shell drilled an 11p advance to 444.5p on CSFB optimism and rehashed rumours of a merger with French rival Elf. Centrica flared 2.25p higher to 124.5p on big volume as speculation that it had dropped out of the bidding for the RAC continued to circulate.

The media sector featured on the market's front page. United News & Media surged 38p to 656p, as analysts warmed to Monday's trading update. Merrill Lynch advised clients to buy the regional publisher with HSBC slapping a 725p target on the stock. Flextech, the TV company,

SHARE SPOTLIGHT
ALLIED IRISH BANKS

blended 50p higher to 901p. Several brokers are recommending the stock, but there is also a whisper that it is preparing to sell its 18.6 per cent stake in Scottish Media Group, the publisher and broadcaster, unchanged at 469p. United or the ITV companies Granada, 20p higher at 1,104, and Carlton, down 1.5p to 621.5p, could buy Flextech's holding.

Kingfisher rose a majestic 46p to 882p after unveiling a pan-European Internet service, the French entrepreneur Bernard Arnault. The Internet-cred boosted the Prudential, 29.5p higher at 669p after putting its low-cost bank, Egg, on the web. Cracking customer figures from Egg also helped.

Dixons, the Internet star, was on the wane. The retailer crashed 82p to 1,321p amid worries that the web marketplace is getting crowded. A late Internet arrival, WH Smith, was also hurt and lost 16p to 762.5p. Profit-taking also hit Invensys, the former BTR-Siebe, which fell 21.25p to 315.75p.

The mid-cap failed to keep

pace with the leaders, managing an anaemic 20.1 rise to 5,087.7. The small cap outperformed it once again, setting a 1999 trading record and a closing high of 2542.4 – an 8.5 increase on the day.

Premier Farnell led the charge of the engineers. The group rose 14.5p to 263p as Merrill Lynch said "accumulate", and targeted 290p. The rest of the metal-bashers were boosted by a bullish CBI report on manufacturers' confidence. TI, where the US predator KKR has a big stake, put on 25.75p to 495p. Charter soared 23.5p to 453.5p and Glynwed was 10p up to 217.5p. Pilkington benefited from the manufacturers' bonanza and rose 3.75p to 81.75p. Rumours of a strike from the French group Saint Gobain are always lurking.

The high-flying micro-chip maker ARM Holdings lost 31.5p to 665p after its big share issue.

ALPHAMERIC, a supplier of broadcast equipment, surged 3p yesterday to an all-time high of 73.5p with more than 125,000 shares traded.

The company has developed software used to beam horse races into bookmakers' shops. A number of major bookies, thought to include Ladbrokes and William Hill, have had it on trial for a year and are believed to be keen to renew their contract, leaving Alphameric with some £25m of fresh cash.

holder Acorn was taken private. The deal could pave the way for a bid for ARM by a US computer giant such as Intel.

The healthcare group Smith & Nephew bid 8p to 154.5p amid rumours that its artificial skin product could be blocked by US regulators. The sausage-skin maker Durex burnt 7p to 137.5p as an expected 200p-per-share bid failed to arrive. The troubled cash-and-carry Booker soared 6p to 72p. There is some talk that the US giant Walmart is not interested in Safeway, down 6p to 272.5p, or Asda, 5.75p higher to 200.5p and might be after Booker's large stores instead. The equally troubled group Albert Fisher digested a 1p rise to 6p on massive volume of 54 million shares. News on the disposal of its US distribution activities should be around the corner.

Ultima Network, a small computer services group, rose 0.75p to 3.5p as a stock overhang was cleared. Silvermine, an electrical equipment group, buzzed 7.5p higher to 38.5p after revealing it had turned down a bid from a former executive.

NRP, whose main unit is the stockbroker Teather & Greenwood, rose 15p to 205p after saying that the bumper year on the stockmarket will push profits "significantly ahead" of analysts' expectations of £1.06m.

SEAG VOLUME: 1.09m
TRADES: 86,246
GILTS: 110.39-40

The mid-cap failed to keep

pace with the leaders, managing an anaemic 20.1 rise to 5,087.7. The small cap outperformed it once again, setting a 1999 trading record and a closing high of 2542.4 – an 8.5 increase on the day.

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NRP, whose main unit is the stockbroker Teather & Greenwood, rose 15p to 205p after saying that the bumper year on the stockmarket will push profits "significantly ahead" of analysts' expectations of £1.06m.

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TRADES: 86,246
GILTS: 110.39-40

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Premier Farnell led the charge

SPORT

'It takes a certain skill to have great Olympians in one decade and athletics in the hand of the receivers the next'

Pascoe faces biggest hurdle of all



THE BRIAN VINED INTERVIEW

IN A CERTAIN Sunday newspaper supplement listing the richest people in Britain, the name of Alan Pascoe popped up in joint 971st place. Pascoe – the former Commonwealth and European champion in the 400 metres hurdles, and Olympic silver medallist, who in 1975 was ranked world No 1 – is not used to coming joint 971st. But in this particular hurdle race – for what is business, or for that matter life, but a series of hurdles? – he reckons he did not even deserve to be on the track. The list valued him at £21m.

A considerable exaggeration, he insists. "I wonder whether I can take action to get hold of the balance between what I'm really worth and what they claim," he adds, amiably.

Still, even Pascoe would concede that he is a millionaire several times over, such as has been the success of his various events promotions and marketing companies. The latest of them, *Fast Track*, born nearly a year ago, has been charged with the difficult task of giving British athletics back the spring in its step, following the financial collapse of the British Athletic Federation in October 1997. And the feeling in the sport – certainly the feeling of its Supreme Being, the chief executive of UK Athletics, David Moorcroft – is that, if anyone can do it, it is the formidably energetic and able Pascoe.

We meet at *Fast Track's* smart suite of offices overlooking Sloane Street in Knightsbridge. As I wait for Pascoe, I watch two or three women with poodles crossing the road. These are women who put on track-suits only when they're planning to jump the queue at Harvey Nichols, confirming that Knightsbridge is a curious location for what in some respects has become the nerve centre of British athletics.

Pascoe arrives. His lanky frame has filled out somewhat since he retired from hurdling in 1975, but it is still a fit-looking 52. And he will need to be fit if he is to help Moorcroft rebuild athletics. A year ago, as he was preparing to launch *Fast Track*, he called several sports journalists he had known in his competing days.

"I was horrified by the extent to which they had written athletics off, largely because, however well we did overall, we failed to win any gold medals in the Atlanta Olympics or in the World Championships in Athens. It is true that athletics was at a very low ebb. It was basically structured on the Victorian concept of committees, and was not set up remotely as a business. Many of the events had lost their purpose and had become a fly-past for the athletes, who were receiving disproportionately large sums."

"But even so, by any criteria, athletics was still our most successful international sport. About 200 countries take part in the World Championships and any of them – Namibia,



Alan Pascoe, millionaire and former Olympic silver medalist, takes time out from reviving the financial fortunes of British athletics at his London office yesterday

Robert Hallam

Surinam, Sudan – can take away gold medals. There aren't many gold medals to go round. It is really tough to get them. But that message is never put across and I guess it's not a message people want to hear. We will do very well, I believe, to get one gold medal at the World Championships in Seville this summer. The management of expectation is important."

Pascoe is keen on phrases like the "management of expectation", a reminder that he is, first and foremost, a marketing man. And like Sebastian Coe – whom he recently appointed chairman of *Fast Track Events*, the arm of the company responsible for staging Britain's seven televised athletics meetings – he hated contemplating the mire into which athletics had sunk. As Coe bluntly put it: "It takes a certain skill to have great Olympians in one decade and the sport in the hand of the receivers the next."

For Pascoe, the descent of the sport into administrative and fiscal chaos is particularly maddening as his company, API, had raised, over 10 years, some £20m in sponsorship. "We found a coaching sponsor, Post Office Counters, who put in a million a year and wouldn't we love that now. But neither the governing body nor the coaches, who were the main beneficiaries, lifted a finger to make that sponsorship work. It was a typical example of the Victorian amateur approach to the sport. We are prepared to take the money, but don't expect us to do anything. It was like banging my head against a brick wall." After a 400-metre run up, to boot

This time round, with *Fast Track* organising the meetings, Pascoe has a stronger grip on the product he is trying to sell. Yesterday, he announced a significant hike in the prize money available to athletes competing in Britain – nearly \$750,000 (£468,000) at the showpiece meeting on 7 August, with \$15,000 (£9,300) for winners. And he is already challenging conventions by reducing the number of simultaneous events, so that the long-jump, for instance, will no longer have to compete for the crowd's attention with the javelin and the pole vault.

"We are trying," he says, "to make it a one-ring circus. We are replacing the scratchy old PA systems. We are bringing in huge video screens, so that people will get the action-replays they expect if they are

watching on television. Before, with information on cardboard scoreboards, if people didn't know where to look, they had no idea what was going on. But at the indoor grand prix in Birmingham this year, we stopped all track events and focused on the women's triple-jump, which worked out as we hoped, because Ashia Hansen was trailing until the last round. The crowd was clapping and chanting. It was wonderful."

Hansen's leaps forward are as nothing, though, compared with what Pascoe is trying to do. And he looks enviously towards the impressive new Heysel stadium in Brussels, where crowds for athletics meetings top 40,000. "They have African drums beating during the long-distance races and they do it very well. I would love to have such

crowds and stadia here. On the other hand, when the javelin throwers came out after the European Championships in Budapest, and Steve Backley threw 85 or 86 metres, only one person clapped out of 45,000. So Brussels is not a role model in every respect."

Besides, athletics meetings cannot be turned into *son et lumiere* spectacles by will alone. They need money. And last year there was very little of it. "We had a very weak TV deal with Channel 4 and the sport was run on a shoestring," says Pascoe.

As a result, the International Amateur Athletic Federation delivered the ultimate snub, downgrading events held in Britain, and recently restoring them to grand prix I status only in response to a spirited campaign led by Pascoe, Moorcroft, David Hemery and Coe.

Pascoe was delighted, but not as delighted as he was last October, at the end of what he describes as one of the best weeks of his life. To the BBC's chagrin, Channel 4 had pinched the rights to Test cricket. The BBC badly needed to reinforce its commitment to British sport.

It was already planning to bid for the rights to televise athletics but, following the cricket episode, the deal – some four times as lucrative as the Channel 4 agreement – was hurried through. Bluntly, did BBC executives throw more money at athletics than they really wanted to, in order to buy back some desperately-needed credibility?

Pascoe is diplomatic. "I like to think of it as a fair deal for the BBC, as

well as the right deal for the future of athletics," he says.

The BBC investment came as an enormous shot in the arm, if that is not too provocative an image in athletics. Pascoe is wearied by the fuss over drugs. "Other sports, soccer and rugby league in particular, have more drugs positives," he says.

"Athletics is singled out, yet no sport in Britain has the testing regime we have. Any athlete is liable to be tested at any time, anywhere. If they go abroad they have to leave an address. If they can't be contacted, they can be suspended. Many of us would see that as an imposition, civil liberties and all that sort of thing."

Towards the end of his own career, Pascoe became increasingly aware of the use of drugs. "But the feeling was that it was an Eastern bloc thing, and particularly that it was the big throwers. From the details that have been coming out of Eastern Europe, it's now clear that there was widespread usage, from very early on. Horrible. It is possible that someone could still prove that I should have been the gold rather than silver medallist at the European Championships in 1971, because I was beaten by an Eastern bloc runner, but I would hate to think that that was the case. I'm grateful for what I have."

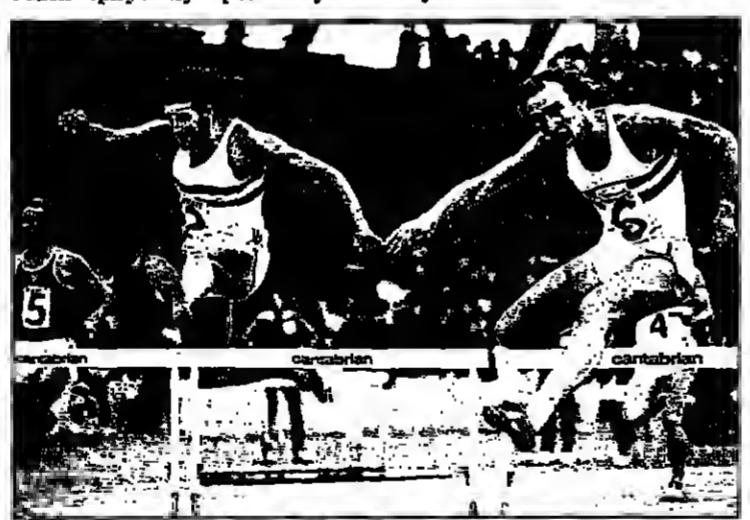
"Oo reflection, though, there was a hurdler I always beat as a junior. And he wasn't from Eastern Europe. He suddenly came out one season and was two yards faster. But I knew that nobody had trained harder than me that winter."

Asthmatic as a boy and, in his own words, uncoordinated, Pascoe overtook many more natural athletes in his quest for gold medals, and it is the same single-mindedness that has served him so well in business. Moreover, his hurdling career gives him a useful perspective on the sport, and he has no truck with the theory that the golden age has passed.

"I remember people saying: 'What will follow when Pascoe, Foster and Capes go?' And of course, what followed – Ovett, Coe and then Cram – was immeasurably better. Then when everyone was crying into their bread again, along came Sally Gunnell and Linford Christie. Now we have Jonathan Edwards, Steve Backley and Ashia Hansen and, at under-23 level, more depth than ever before."

With that depth, plus the strides made by Moorcroft in making athletics commercially viable, Pascoe believes that the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester could and should be a glittering showpiece. "I think it's very important for British sport. Until Euro 96, the two biggest events here were the World Student Games and the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh.

"Neither was a success. So the rest of sport has to show that it's not just soccer that can put on big events. In 2003 we will hopefully have the world athletics championships, which is part of the drive for the 2006 soccer World Cup. By then we will be ready to make a serious Olympic bid. I just hope it happens in my time." As do we all.



Allsport

Celebration has its place

Sir: The *Independent* contained a report (20 April) by Glenn Moore about England's bid to host the World Cup in 2006 in which he calls Sir Bobby Charlton's remark about wanting to run on the pitch after the Manchester United-Arsenal cup replay a *fu*** pass.

In the context of the bid, it may have been unwise, but I think it was an honest and valid expression of how we all felt. I listened to the match on radio and then watched the late-night highlights on terrestrial TV. I am a neutral (a Tottenham supporter) who admires the current Manchester United and Arsenal sides; but I was completely caught up in the match. The newspapers the next day were full of it, especially Giggs' marvellous match-winning goal. Given that the match had generated so much excitement, it hardly seems wrong that the fans there wanted to show their feelings the way they did.

Sir Bobby's later comment that "we don't want to see fans on the pitch" may have been more politically correct, but it perpetuates the error that the fans are an unfortunate nuisance who need to be kept in their place. Their place seems to be at the turnstiles meekly shelling out their cash or in front of a TV screen providing a captive audience for advertisers.

Bobby Charlton's first comment expressed the feelings of all true lovers of the game. Celebration is an important part of any sport and more should be done to find ways to accommodate the natural expression of feelings after such powerful events.

STEPHEN FORES
Plaistow
London

SPORTS LETTERS

Post letters to Sports Desk at 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and include a daytime telephone number. Faxes to 0171 293 2894 or e-mail to sport@independent.co.uk. E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity

Match United

Sir: The theory that the gap is now closed between the English and Italian football leagues because of Manchester United's exploits in Europe surely requires more English teams to prove it. The rest of the Premiership are years behind Manchester United when it comes to seeking top European honours and only United have the measure of the best Italian sides.

It's no coincidence that Italian teams feature in two of the European finals with the others all reaching the latter stages of their respective European competitions. Bar Manchester United, it seems there are a different set of English clubs venturing into Europe every season and getting knocked out.

As novices, they end up either feeling their way around or attacking with naive bravado. United, however, with their valuable travelling experience and a squad which is large enough and talented enough to cope with crises, have evolved to be able to impose their tenacious and refreshingly hungry brand of play on opponents who come expecting a game of chess-like football.

However the absurd number of games in which players are expected to perform in this country will have to be cut severely if they are to maintain the fitness and relish for the game that is essential for competing in Europe.

ALAN GLYNN
Finchley
London

Give it a rest

Sir: And the whingeing goes on! Am I alone in finding it incomprehensible that Manchester United, with a minimum of 18 international players, find playing nine games in 36 days as being too much.

Turning the clock back 10 years, Liverpool played eight games in 26 days post Hillsborough in the days when squads were limited and each player had experienced the trauma of attending several funerals. It was little wonder that Arsenal went on to win the title, and they were commendably acclaimed as champions by the Kop despite the obvious disappointment.

JOHN GREENWOOD
Warrington
Cheshire

Do let's be fair

Sir: I have never been to Old Trafford in my life but that didn't stop me lending my support to Manchester United as I watched their European Cup semi-final against Juventus on TV. Nor did it prevent the eventual enjoyment I took from their stirring victory.

What I find difficult to accept are those moaners and whingers who denigrate United's achievement through meanness or petty jealousy. To illustrate, a Liverpool season ticket-holding colleague told me that at Anfield on the night of the match, Liverpool fans were chanting "Juve" when the Italians took the lead. What sportsmanship!

JEREMY KENNEDY
Southport
West Midlands

Foreign flair

Sir: I have just looked at your Premiership Team of the Week (Sport, Monday 27 April) and it makes fascinating reading.

The defence is made in Britain, including David Seaman, Gary Neville, Rio Ferdinand, Tony Adams and Nigel Winterburn, but the midfield and attack, with the exception of Kevin Campbell (who is newly returned from Turkey) comprises the Best of the Rest: Dietmar Hamann, Evol Berkovic, Patrick Vieira, Harry Kewell and Nwankwo Kanu.

There, in one team, a reflection of the Premiership (Manchester United excepted), with the stout British defenders doing and dying in the rearguard and the skilful, creative foreigners providing imagination and flair.

And David Ginola wins the PFA Player of the Year Award just to prove the point.

ANDREW SCOTT
Blaenavon
West Midlands

Aust

Rugby League
Bron
rock
route
star

TODAY'S

Australia win right to host 2001 Lions tour

TRULY. THIS is the age of the Wallaby. Australia, a very smart bet to win their second world title this autumn, can boast the Cook Cup, the Bledisloe Cup, the best player on the planet in John Eales and, uniquely, six-figure rugby audiences in both Melbourne and Sydney, where 100,000 tickets have already been sold for the Centenary Test against England on 26 June. And by way of exploding the myth that no-one gets everything they want, they now have the Lions, too, much to the

RUGBY UNION

BY CHRIS HEWETT

disgust of their nearest and dearest in New Zealand.

John O'Neill, the chief executive of the Australian Rugby Union, announced yesterday that he and his colleagues had won the right to host the British Isles tour party in 2001. "The Lions represent the finest in rugby tradition," he gushed, his tone entirely different to the one he adopted 10 months ago in

lombasting Clive Woodward's weakened side following their 7-6 surrender in Brisbane. "They were victorious in South Africa in 1997 and should prove an awesome draw when they get here in two years' time."

O'Neill has jumped the gun on this issue before - he made similarly confident noises last year, only to receive an ear-bashing from the New Zealand Rugby Football Union, which insisted that the 2001 tour would be split between the two countries - but International Board

delegates are now thought to have rejected deeply unpopular plans to sanction an itinerary giving the Wallabies and the All Blacks two Tests a piece. Confirmation is expected later this week when the IRB releases an up-dated tour schedule.

Neither the All Blacks nor the Springboks will be particularly pleased; instead of waiting eight years for a Lions visit, they will now have to wait 12. Given the pulling power of the most celebrated touring side in world rugby, treasures from

Dunedin to Durban will be counting the cost of Australia's rise to prominence over the last decade and a half.

There will be considerable debate over the length of the proposed tour; the Lions played 13 matches in Springbok country two years ago but, notwithstanding the startling rise of Australia Capital Territory as a competitive Super-12 outfit, the Wallabies would struggle to field more than 10 sides capable of giving the combined might of Britain and Ireland a meaningful work-out. When the Lions last visited Australia in 1989 - Finlay Calder's team won the Test series 2-1 - their 12-date programme included fixtures with New South Wales, New South Wales B and New South Wales Country. Every rugby player in the state, good and bad, seemed to have a crack at the visitors and many had two bites at the red-shirted cherry.

The likelihood this time is that outside the three Tests and heavy-duty matches against the three elite Super-12 sides -

Queensland Reds, New South Wales Waratahs and ACT Brumbies - the Lions will play a "missionary" fixture against Western Australia in Perth, two up-country select XV's and, possibly, a midweek game against either Australia A or an Australian Barbarians side.

Namibia's participation in the forthcoming World Cup was threatened yesterday when the country's sports commission banned the national team from all competitive activity pending an investigation into alleged

racism. Karel Persendt, the president of the commission, accused the white-dominated Namibian Rugby Union of ignoring an agreement designed to increase black representation in the domestic league.

Andries Wahl, the NRU chairman, said he was "absolutely baffled" by the commission's decision. A similar situation developed in South Africa last year and was resolved only when Louis Luyt, the dictatorial union chief from Johannesburg, stepped down.

Rugby League: London owe debt to unlikely cast of characters for chance to play in Saturday's Challenge Cup final

Broncos' rocky route to stardom

BY DAVE HADFIELD

APART FROM themselves, nobody expects London's rugby league team to give Leeds many problems at Wembley on Saturday. The mere fact that they are there at all, though, is testimony to the way that relays of torch-bearers have defied the odds by keeping the flame alive.

When Richard Branson leads out the Broncos for the Silk Cut Challenge Cup final, he will be the latest and most recognisable of an often unlikely cast of characters who have sustained the dream of making the code a success in the capital.

It is a dream that goes back a long way - to Brigadier-General A C Critchley in 1933, just four years after the Challenge Cup final was played at Wembley for the first time.

Even allowing for the eccentricities of some of his successors, the Brigadier-General was an unusual rugby league evangelist. A former Canadian mountie and Conservative MP (not simultaneously), his other schemes included the introduction of cheetah racing to the capital.

It had the White City greyhound stadium on his hands, doing very little for most of the time, and acquired the Wigan Highfield club to play there. They did so for just one season, quite successfully in terms of results, before Critchley declared the experiment a failure and Highfield returned to a nomadic existence in the north-west.

Another greyhound man, Sydney Parkes, went one better by setting up two London clubs - Acton and Willesden and Streatham and Mitcham. The former lasted one season, the latter two, although they did create the first banner headlines for the code in London by signing one of the world's leading rugby union stars, the New Zealander George Nepia.

It was Parkes' failure to gain a greyhound racing licence -

It is difficult to recreate now the sensation that Fulham's arrival in 1980 caused. Rugby league had been virtually static since the War, with only the addition of Workington and Whitehaven from what was already a hot-bed of the game, and Blackpool from marginally outside the mainstream. Expansion had been a discredited notion; consolidation was the mind-set of the 60s and 70s and the code looked a more exclusively northern preoccupation than ever.

So when the Warrington director, Harold Genders, persuaded the Fulham chairman, Eric Clay, to set up a rugby league team at Craven Cottage, it was not just national but world-wide sporting news. I can vouch for the fact that it was the back-page lead in *The South China Morning Post* in many ways; that first season remains the best-ever for the game in London. Almost 10,000 were watching as Fulham, with a side of Northerners expertly led by their player-coach, Reg Bowden, beat Wigan in their inaugural fixture, and there were more than 15,000 present, setting a record that still stands, against Wakefield in the Challenge Cup.

Fulham were promoted twice and relegated twice. Clay, under pressure from a board that had hoped, like him, to make money for the football club, pulled the plug in 1984.

A couple from Maidenhead, Roy and Barbara Close, and the first player Fulham had signed, Roy Lester, emerged as the club's saviours. Most of the players had moved on as free agents and a new team began life at the National Sports Centre at Crystal Palace, an unlikely venue if ever there was one.

The club soldiered on in even more reduced circumstances at Chiswick Polytechnic's ground - surely the only one in the history of the game with a miniature railway behind the stand - and almost closed for good in 1986, only the players agreeing to appear for nothing against Huddersfield enabling it to fulfil its fixtures.

Supporters virtually ran the club the following season and a shifting cast of characters, including two high-profile overseas coaches in Ross Strudwick and Tony Gordon, somehow kept it alive into the 1990s, by which time it had been back to Crystal Palace, changed its name to the London Crusaders and settled at Cophill Stadium in Barnet.

These had been years full of drama, defiance and recrimination, but the biggest up-

heavals were still to come. Prompted by the then chief executive of the Rugby League and - whatever else he might have done right or wrong London's stalwartest ally, Maurice Lindsay, the Brisbane Broncos bought the club, renamed it and moved it to The Valley to take up its guaranteed Super League place.

Alarmed by the cost of the venture, they were relieved in the end to pass the baton to Barry Maranta and then on to Branson. But, when he steps out at Wembley, Branson will represent all his predecessors, competent and incompetent, honest and devious, wealthy and bankrupt, who somehow kept the show on the road.

If this is anyone's final, it is theirs. And that cheetah racing could still work.

■ With acknowledgement to *Touch and Go: A History of Professional Rugby in London* (London League Publications).

Martin Offiah (left) and John Temu celebrate the semi-final win over Castleford that took London Broncos to Wembley for the first time Charles Knight

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Wasim in bullish mood

CRICKET

BY MARK PIERSON

Pakistan arrived in England yesterday as one of the favourites for the World Cup, with their captain Wasim Akram insisting his team's chances will not be harmed by match-fixing allegations.

A commission investigating the claims is to hold its final hearing in Lahore today. However, despite the distraction to his team's World Cup preparations, a bullish Wasim was quick to deny suggestions of team morale being affected.

"The match-fixing issue

doesn't matter to the Pakistan cricket team. We have been surprised but I can assure every member of the team is ready to give his best to bring back the Cup," Wasim said.

Ricardo Powell, a 20-year-old all-rounder who has yet to play

a one-day match for his native Jamaica, will replace Carl Hooper in the West Indies

squad, following Hooper's retirement from international cricket. Powell is an attacking middle-order batsman, an off-spin bowler and brilliant fielder - but he has only played six first-class matches and has no experience in England.

"We will obviously miss Carl, who is an outstanding cricketer and had vast experience, not least playing for Kent in the English County Championship for

many years," Clive Lloyd, the West Indies' manager, said. "But this is a chance for Powell to show his worth in the highest tournament in world cricket."

West Indies' cricket chief

is to meet next month for talks on how to avoid a repetition of the crowd trouble in the recent one-day series against Australia. Some of the measures already raised are high fences and only allowing the use of plastic bottles at all grounds.

On the domestic front, Alec Stewart, the England captain, will miss his last game for Surrey before the World Cup due to a family bereavement.

Stewart had hoped to return to form with the bat at Northampton but the death of his grandmother, Rose, means he will miss the game starting today. "At times like this there are more important things than cricket," Stewart said.

Mark Lathwell, the Somerset batsman, may miss the entire season because of a knee injury sustained on a pre-season tour to South Africa.

THE SYDNEY to Hobart Race, which claimed six lives, including the British Olympic yachtsman Gary Charles, when the fleet was battered by 80 mph winds last December, will open part of the third leg to Auckland. The yachts must stop for a minimum of three hours for a "pit stop" to make any running repairs before re-crossing the finish line in the Derwent River to race another 1,800 miles up the Tasman Sea.

Sydney will also provide the second stopover in the race, which starts at the end of September 2001 in Southampton, Fremantle, in Western Australia, has been dropped and there was disappointment in Melbourne, which had mounted a concerted campaign to be the only Australian port of call, basking in the success of 1997-98, but will then by-pass Britain, no longer hosting the finish, to the final two stops in Gothenburg, Volvo's home port in Sweden, and Kiel in Germany.

The first stopover will again be Cape Town, and the inclusion of the Sydney-Hobart Race will mean a high-profile restart

of the race in 2002.

After the second leg in front of huge crowds. However, the rumour has it that the race will only form part of the third leg to Auckland. The yachts must stop for a minimum of three hours for a "pit stop" to make any running repairs before re-crossing the finish line in the Derwent River to race another 1,800 miles up the Tasman Sea.

The United States stopovers have already been confirmed as Miami, which replaces Fort Lauderdale, and, for the second leg, Baltimore. After Auckland and rounding Cape Horn, the fleet in South America will be Rio de Janeiro, which replaces São Paulo in Brazil. From Baltimore the yachts re-cross the Atlantic to La Rochelle, considered highly successful in 1997-98, but will then by-pass Britain, no longer hosting the finish, to the final two stops in Gothenburg, Volvo's home port in Sweden, and Kiel in Germany.

Speaking at the Multiplast

factory where the French hull

is being built in Vannes for the

Sixth Sense syndicate, Gel-

leiseau said no budget was

available for significant im-

provements to the boat, which

will be launched on 18 June.

Marc Pajot, who will line up

for Europe on Saturday against

Pierre Mas in the opening

foray for the Adecco Maxi

World Championship in Cadiz,

has run into money problems

with the Swiss Fast 2000 syndicate. Their challenge is on

hold as vital funding has fallen through.

In the America's Cup, the British bid for the event at the end of this year is expected to be wound up today while Luc Gellieau, in charge of the French challenge, admitted that even to make the semi-finals of the Louis Vuitton Cup

will be a "missionary" fixture against

Western Australia in Perth, two up-country select XV's and, possibly, a midweek game against either Australia A or an Australian Barbarians side.

Andries Wahl, the NRU chairman, said he was "absolutely baffled" by the commission's decision.

A similar situation developed in South Africa last year and was resolved only when Louis Luyt, the dictatorial union chief from Johannesburg, stepped down.

The full scale of the London

Broncos' task in the Silk Cut

Challenge Cup final at Wemb-

ley on Saturday has become a

little clearer with Graham Mur-

ray naming a full-strength

Leeds side for Wembley. The

last injury doubt was cleared

yesterday when the New

Zealand Test centre, Richie

Blackmore, was included in

the team despite not having

played since the semi-final vic-

to Bradfurd.

Blackmore has a recurring groin complaint but is confident that he will get through the match. His inclusion is important because, quite apart from an ability to break tackles in the backline, he is one of only two Leeds players with previous experience of the final, having played in the Castleford side that lost there in 1992. Francis Cummings, who played in the Leeds teams beaten by Wigan in 1994 and 1995, is the other.

The unlucky player is Marvin Golden, who was playing splendidly in the three-quarter line before suffering an ankle injury. Golden made a successful comeback on Sunday, but Blackmore's return pushes him out. Murray has opted for three forwards - Lee Jackson, Jamie Mathiou and Andy Hay - alongside the utility player Marcus St Hilaire on the substitutes' bench.

Shaun Edwards said yester-

day he expected to be fit for

the Broncos. He was seeing a specialist about his broken

thumb last night and said: "I'll

be very disappointed if I don't

play, but it's up to the coaches."

If it is any indication, Edwards came through a game of novelty rugby with two teams of women on a bouncy castle on *The Big Breakfast* yesterday morning. "And the tackling was pretty hard," he insisted.

The Bradford Bulls should learn today what the future holds for their ground at Odsal. The Bulls have campaigned for years for rebuilding to update the council-owned stadium and Bradford's regeneration committee

Prescott makes a Dash for a Classic

YOUNG FAMILIES have been rushing past the gates of Heath House in Newmarket this week following news of the great master's swift deterioration.

Sir Mark Prescott, the champion of the amateur conditions event, the trainer who won seven of the first nine claimers to his run in Britain, the great manipulator in handicaps, is beginning to slip away. Confirmation of his fading faculties came in a simple and saddening gesture. He is about to run one of his string in a Classic. "I don't know what's come over me," Prescott said from his resting place yesterday. "I must have gone potty."

"I'm very worried about it [Triple Dash's entry in Saturday's 2,000 Guineas], especially as I've had no pressure from the owners to run. I can't blame them. It's all very unlikely and I don't know quite what I'm doing."

This, of course, is not exactly true. Prescott's title of honour was not bestowed to a dithrilling nobleman who left his brains at the portcullis. The baronet has spent the near 30 years of his life with a licence excavating for treasures in the

programme book. He used to be as much a scourge of the North as Rob Roy until others followed in his cartwheels. And then he found other areas to exploit.

Throughout it all, though, there were never any big winners and critics viewed Prescott as the natural counterbalance to the Quixotic Crite Brittain and Paul Kelleway - a man who kept his horses below their level. Whatever the merit to that argument, they can never say again that Sir Mark does not win major races. Pivotal provided

RICHARD EDMONDSON
Nap: Ingletorian
(Malo 8.30)
NB: Zurs
(Ascot 5.15)

him with his first Group One in York's Nunthorpe Stakes two years ago and there have been the flying fillies Last Second and Alborada recently too. But there has only ever been one Classic runner from Heath House and even that was on the Continent. Red Camellia finished third, beaten less than a length, in the



Digacre (No 6) leads Tearaway King (left) over the double bank on the way to victory at Punchestown yesterday

1997 Poule d'Essai des Pouliches (France 1,000 Guineas).

It would probably have stayed like that had Prescott not been visited. As the curtains billowed in the wind last year he had a vision of the 1999 2,000 Guineas. "In my little dream world I'd thought of a plan, particularly as Triple Dash is a very useful horse in soft ground," he says. "We're running on the July course, which has got the stiffest last furlong of any track in the country. It has been watered every year for 30 years in the summer, and if we get a lot of rain it will be a morass."

It is, nevertheless, remarkable that Prescott is attending with his portion. Heath House does not usually awake from winter slumber until it hears the jangle of Morris Men around the Maypole. "I'm always out of form until the middle of the year," Prescott admits. "But

everyone. There would be seven or eight runners, on this morass, and the fancied horse would do too much and I'd come along and fluke it."

"But the Almighty isn't on my side because he cracked the hucket of water on the July course last weekend instead of this. And the real good thing hasn't materialised. Everyone who's got half a racehorse is pointing up."

It is, nevertheless, remarkable that Prescott is attending with his portion. Heath House does not usually awake from winter slumber until it hears the jangle of Morris Men around the Maypole. "I'm always out of form until the middle of the year," Prescott admits. "But

then I always think the Classics come far too soon. The Guineas comes very early and the Derby is up hill and down dale on ground too fast, but that's what it's all about. That's all part of trying to find a very good horse. A proper horse will come early and still last the season."

"But, along the way, there have been endless good horses ruined just so they could get to the Guineas. Careers sacrificed on the altar of 1 May. But my horse has come to himself and I've had no difficulty getting him ready. I haven't done anything with him that I didn't want to do."

"I believe all horses develop in their own time. It's a bit like flowers. Daffodils come at this

influence may not be able to get her inside the July Course safety limit of 23 runners.

Bountiful Lady is the 27th and lowest rated of those declared at the five-day stage, despite winning her only race, and can run only if others defect. Magda, Jig and Lamenza are also in danger.

This is of no matter to Steven Drowne, who has been given a debut Guineas opportunity aboard Mick Channon's Golden Silca. "I sat on her this morning and she worked very nicely," the jockey best known for his handicap alliances with Hard To Figure and Sea Freedom said. "She is a game filly who was second in her trial and who will have an outside chance."

Caroline Norris

Mann has cause to celebrate Celibate

CELEBRATE AND Richard Dunwoody gave the Lambourn trainer Charlie Mann his most notable success yesterday with a win over Space Trucker and Direct Route in the £25,000 BMW Chase on the opening day of Punchestown's Festival.

"The plan was to make the running and he enjoyed it," Mann said of the 7-1 winner. "Richard and I agreed that we might as well go out in front because Direct Route and Space Trucker are held up usually."

"Direct Route has had a hard season," his jockey, Norman Williamson, said. "He travelled well enough, but emptied when he hit the last."

Cardinal Hill signed off for the season with a comfortable win in the Champion Novices' Hurdle, in which Nicky Henderson's Bacchanal jumped badly and finished last of the five runners. He was later found to be lame.

Ireland's top two chasers,

Dorans Pride and Florida Pearl,

provide today's highlight in the Heinlein Gold Cup, with the

score between them standing at one-all.

Adrian Maguire was due to replace the hospitalised Paul Carberry on Dorans Pride but he cracked a bone in his wrist at Plumpton on Monday and will be out of action for two weeks. Tony McCoy now takes the ride. David Nicholson's Gold Cup seventh, Escartegue, re-

opposes Florida Pearl on Sib better terms than when two lengths second in the Hennessy Gold Cup at Leopardstown.

Following an injury scare at the weekend, the participation of Joe Mac in the Champion Novices' Hurdle will be decided after he canters this morning.

High Lee

Four-time

PUNCHESTOWN

2.40 STANLEY COOKER CHAMPION NOVICE HURDLE (Grade 1) £50,000 added 2m 4f Penalty Value £31,000

DURBAN'S MATE (4) (M) Paden N Tension-Dale (GB) 12.0...
SANDWICH (1) (M) Paden N Tension-Dale (GB) 12.0...
SWEETIE (2) (M) Paden N Tension-Dale (GB) 12.0...
SUGARFOOT (3) (M) Paden N Tension-Dale (GB) 12.0...
TRANS ISLAND (5) (M) Paden N Tension-Dale (GB) 12.0...
RISQUE LADY (6) (M) Paden N Tension-Dale (GB) 12.0...
- declared

BETTING: 5-2 Recipe Lucy 11-4 Right Wing 12-2 Beppe 14-2 Duck Run 14-2 Dunes Island

FORM GUIDE

Duck Run 2000 Guineas 6th and 2nd Stakes. Recipe Lucy 1st. Right Wing over 2000m. Beppe 1st. Dunes Island 2nd. Sandoch 1st. Sweetie 2nd. Sugarfoot 3rd. Trans Island 4th. Risque Lady 5th. Sugarfoot 6th. Recipe Lucy 7th. Duck Run 8th. Beppe 9th. Dunes Island 10th. Sandoch 11th. Right Wing 12th. Dunes Island 13th.

VERDICT: The 11-year-old Right Wing is the best chance of a four-year-old novice. Recipe Lucy is a good second.

1-2 Duck Run, 3-4 Right Wing, 5-6 Recipe Lucy, 7-8 Beppe, 9-10 Dunes Island, 11-12 Sandoch, 12-13 Sugarfoot, 13-14 Trans Island, 14-15 Risque Lady.

2-3 Duck Run, 4-5 Right Wing, 6-7 Recipe Lucy, 7-8 Beppe, 8-9 Dunes Island, 9-10 Sandoch, 10-11 Sugarfoot, 11-12 Trans Island, 12-13 Risque Lady.

3-4 Duck Run, 5-6 Right Wing, 6-7 Recipe Lucy, 7-8 Beppe, 8-9 Dunes Island, 9-10 Sandoch, 10-11 Sugarfoot, 11-12 Trans Island, 12-13 Risque Lady.

4-5 Duck Run, 6-7 Right Wing, 7-8 Recipe Lucy, 8-9 Beppe, 9-10 Dunes Island, 10-11 Sugarfoot, 11-12 Trans Island, 12-13 Risque Lady.

5-6 Duck Run, 7-8 Right Wing, 8-9 Recipe Lucy, 9-10 Beppe, 10-11 Dunes Island, 11-12 Sugarfoot, 12-13 Trans Island, 13-14 Risque Lady.

6-7 Duck Run, 8-9 Right Wing, 9-10 Recipe Lucy, 10-11 Beppe, 11-12 Dunes Island, 12-13 Sugarfoot, 13-14 Trans Island, 14-15 Risque Lady.

7-8 Duck Run, 9-10 Right Wing, 10-11 Recipe Lucy, 11-12 Beppe, 12-13 Dunes Island, 13-14 Sugarfoot, 14-15 Trans Island, 15-16 Risque Lady.

8-9 Duck Run, 10-11 Right Wing, 11-12 Recipe Lucy, 12-13 Beppe, 13-14 Dunes Island, 14-15 Sugarfoot, 15-16 Trans Island, 16-17 Risque Lady.

9-10 Duck Run, 11-12 Right Wing, 12-13 Recipe Lucy, 13-14 Beppe, 14-15 Dunes Island, 15-16 Sugarfoot, 16-17 Trans Island, 17-18 Risque Lady.

10-11 Duck Run, 12-13 Right Wing, 13-14 Recipe Lucy, 14-15 Beppe, 15-16 Dunes Island, 16-17 Sugarfoot, 17-18 Trans Island, 18-19 Risque Lady.

11-12 Duck Run, 13-14 Right Wing, 14-15 Recipe Lucy, 15-16 Beppe, 16-17 Dunes Island, 17-18 Sugarfoot, 18-19 Trans Island, 19-20 Risque Lady.

12-13 Duck Run, 14-15 Right Wing, 15-16 Recipe Lucy, 16-17 Beppe, 17-18 Dunes Island, 18-19 Sugarfoot, 19-20 Trans Island, 20-21 Risque Lady.

13-14 Duck Run, 15-16 Right Wing, 16-17 Recipe Lucy, 17-18 Beppe, 18-19 Dunes Island, 19-20 Sugarfoot, 20-21 Trans Island, 21-22 Risque Lady.

14-15 Duck Run, 16-17 Right Wing, 17-18 Recipe Lucy, 18-19 Beppe, 19-20 Dunes Island, 20-21 Sugarfoot, 21-22 Trans Island, 22-23 Risque Lady.

15-16 Duck Run, 17-18 Right Wing, 18-19 Recipe Lucy, 19-20 Beppe, 20-21 Dunes Island, 21-22 Sugarfoot, 22-23 Trans Island, 23-24 Risque Lady.

16-17 Duck Run, 18-19 Right Wing, 19-20 Recipe Lucy, 20-21 Beppe, 21-22 Dunes Island, 22-23 Sugarfoot, 23-24 Trans Island, 24-25 Risque Lady.

17-18 Duck Run, 19-20 Right Wing, 20-21 Recipe Lucy, 21-22 Beppe, 22-23 Dunes Island, 23-24 Sugarfoot, 24-25 Trans Island, 25-26 Risque Lady.

18-19 Duck Run, 20-21 Right Wing, 21-22 Recipe Lucy, 22-23 Beppe, 23-24 Dunes Island, 24-25 Sugarfoot, 25-26 Trans Island, 26-27 Risque Lady.

19-20 Duck Run, 21-22 Right Wing, 22-23 Recipe Lucy, 23-24 Beppe, 24-25 Dunes Island, 25-26 Sugarfoot, 26-27 Trans Island, 27-28 Risque Lady.

20-21 Duck Run, 22-23 Right Wing, 23-24 Recipe Lucy, 24-25 Beppe, 25-26 Dunes Island, 26-27 Sugarfoot, 27-28 Trans Island, 28-29 Risque Lady.

21-22 Duck Run, 23-24 Right Wing, 24-25 Recipe Lucy, 25-26 Beppe, 26-27 Dunes Island, 27-28 Sugarfoot, 28-29 Trans Island, 29-30 Risque Lady.

22-23 Duck Run, 24-25 Right Wing, 25-26 Recipe Lucy, 26-27 Beppe, 27-28 Dunes Island, 28-29 Sugarfoot, 29-30 Trans Island, 30-31 Risque Lady.

23-24 Duck Run, 25-26 Right Wing, 26-27 Recipe Lucy, 27-28 Beppe, 28-29 Dunes Island, 29-30 Sugarfoot, 30-31 Trans Island, 31-32 Risque Lady.

24-25 Duck Run, 26-27 Right Wing, 27-28 Recipe Lucy, 28-29 Beppe, 29-30 Dunes Island, 30-31 Sugarfoot, 31-32 Trans Island, 32-33 Risque Lady.

25-26 Duck Run, 27-28 Right Wing, 28-29 Recipe Lucy, 29-30 Beppe, 30-31 Dunes Island, 31-32 Sugarfoot, 32-33 Trans Island, 33-34 Risque Lady.

26-27 Duck Run, 28-29 Right Wing, 29-30 Recipe Lucy, 30-31 Beppe, 31-32 Dunes Island, 32-33 Sugarfoot, 33-34 Trans Island, 34-35 Risque Lady.

27-28 Duck Run, 29-30 Right Wing, 30-31 Recipe Lucy, 31-32 Beppe, 32-33 Dunes Island, 33-34 Sugarfoot, 34-35 Trans Island, 35-36 Risque Lady.

28-29 Duck Run, 30-31 Right Wing, 31-32 Recipe Lucy, 32-33 Beppe, 33-34 Dunes Island, 34-35 Sugarfoot, 35-36 Trans Island, 36-37 Risque Lady.

29-30 Duck Run, 31-32 Right Wing, 32-33 Recipe Lucy, 33-34 Beppe, 34-35 Dunes Island, 35-36 Sugarfoot, 36-37 Trans Island, 37-38 Risque Lady.

30-31 Duck Run, 32-33 Right Wing, 33-34 Recipe Lucy, 34-35 Beppe, 35-36 Dunes Island, 36-37 Sugarfoot, 37-38 Trans Island, 38-39 Risque Lady.

31-32 Duck Run, 33-34 Right Wing, 34-35 Recipe Lucy, 35-36 Beppe, 36-37 Dunes Island, 37-38 Sugarfoot, 38-39 Trans Island, 39-40 Risque Lady.

32-33 Duck Run, 34-35 Right Wing, 35-36 Recipe Lucy, 36-37 Beppe, 37-38 Dunes Island, 38-39 Sugarfoot, 39-40 Trans Island, 40-41 Risque Lady.

33-34 Duck Run, 35-36 Right Wing, 36-37 Recipe Lucy, 37-38 Beppe, 38-39 Dunes Island, 39-40 Sugarfoot, 40-41 Trans Island, 41-42 Risque Lady.

34-35 Duck Run, 36-37 Right Wing, 37-38 Recipe Lucy, 38-39 Beppe, 39-40 Dunes Island, 40-41 Sugarfoot, 41-42 Trans Island, 42-43 Risque Lady.

35-36 Duck Run, 37-38 Right Wing, 38-39 Recipe Lucy, 39-40 Beppe, 40-41 Dunes Island, 41-42 Sugarfoot, 42-43 Trans Island, 43-44 Risque Lady.

36-37 Duck Run, 38-39 Right Wing, 39-40 Recipe Lucy, 40-41 Beppe, 41-42 Dunes Island, 42-43 Sugarfoot, 43-44 Trans Island, 44-45 Risque Lady.

37-38 Duck Run, 39-40 Right Wing, 40-41 Recipe Lucy, 41-42 Beppe, 42-43 Dunes Island, 43-44 Sugarfoot, 44-45 Trans Island, 45-46 Risque Lady.

38-39 Duck Run, 40-41 Right Wing, 41-42 Recipe Lucy, 42-43 Beppe, 43-44 Dunes Island, 44-45 Sugarfoot, 45-46 Trans Island, 46-47 Risque Lady.

39-40 Duck Run, 41-42 Right Wing, 42-43 Recipe Lucy, 43-44 Beppe, 44-45 Dunes Island, 45-46 Sugarfoot, 46-47 Trans Island, 47-48 Risque Lady.

40-41 Duck Run, 42-43 Right Wing, 43-44 Recipe

SPORT

PASCOE'S BIGGEST HURPLE P22 BRONCOS' ROCKY PATH TO STARDOM P21

McManaman free to prove point

A STADIUM full of ghosts will this evening be infused with the spirit of youth. By design as well as necessity Kevin Keegan, for his second match as England coach, has chosen a team which could make the Nép Stadion the launchpad for several international careers. Two players, Wes Brown of Manchester United and Kevin Phillips of Sunderland, will win their first caps while a clutch of others have opportunities to grasp.

Prime among these is Steve McManaman, who has been given a "free role" by Keegan. After 23 largely disappointing England appearances, especially in the last match against Poland, McManaman is running out of chances to prove he can

FOOTBALL
BY GLENN MOORE
in Budapest

impose himself at this level. Others looking to seize the moment will be international novices Rio Ferdinand, Phil Neville, Nicky Butt and Tim Sherwood.

Behind them David Seaman, winning his 50th international cap, will form the base of a spine which runs through Martin Keown and David Batty to Alan Shearer. The mix of youth and experience ought to be enough for England to avoid losing to a Hungarian side struggling to live up to a glorious past.

However, while keen to win, Keegan is more interested in

seeing individuals produce performances that would ensure them a place in the team for the brace of Euro 2000 qualifiers to be played in June. "Opportunity" has been the coach's theme this week and the approach fits in perfectly with the local mood.

The prime minister is 35 years old and his government is prepared to rebuild Hungarian football by underwriting a joint bid with Austria to stage the 2004 European Championship.

After a decade of failure there is also progress on the pitch. While it is impossible to enter the great of the Nép Stadion without thinking of the great Hungarian team of Ferenc Puskás and Nandor Hidegkuti who beat England 7-1

here 45 years ago, the current squad has only one player over 30 and is mainly composed of 25-year-olds.

Although under Bertalan Bicskei, the 10th coach this decade, they have lost once in 12 matches, Hungary trail Portugal and Romania in their Euro 2000 qualifying group. Their most prominent players are Gábor Király, the goalkeeper, who is said to be interesting Arsenal, and the playmaker Béla Ilyés.

Keegan's team should have enough tacklers in midfield to swamp Ilyés but there could be problems on the flanks, where he expects Hungary to play with two wide men. This could put considerable pressure on Brown

and Neville, who will also be expected to provide width for the England attack. Given that neither players are regulars at club level their brief is a tough one, particularly for Brown whose recent return to the first team has been in central defence.

"He is good enough to play in a variety of positions," said Keegan of the 20-year-old who breaks Gary Neville's record as England's least-experienced cap. Brown has only played 15 first-team matches for United, four of them as substitute, one fewer than Neville when he made his debut in 1995. Michael Owen, incidentally, had played 26 times for Liverpool when he first played for England.

In midfield, Butt will hope to

maintain his fine club form to show he is the natural successor to Paul Ince while Tim Sherwood will seek to build on a promising debut against Poland last month. Keegan hopes they will be supplemented by Rio Ferdinand stepping out from a defence which has three players aged under 23.

The bulk of the creative responsibility will fall on McManaman. Keegan said he has "great faith" in the Liverpool player and that he hopes he has now come to terms with the turmoil surrounding his summer move to Real Madrid. He will certainly never have a better opportunity. A poor crossing, it has always seemed a waste to have his dribbling and shooting

"Even when we went to a place like Hong Kong at the end of the season and some players could not be bothered, I always thought 'there are people here who have paid money to watch me'. It is important to perform."

England have agreed to donate £50,000 to a Kosovo-related charity, split between the players' pool and the FA.

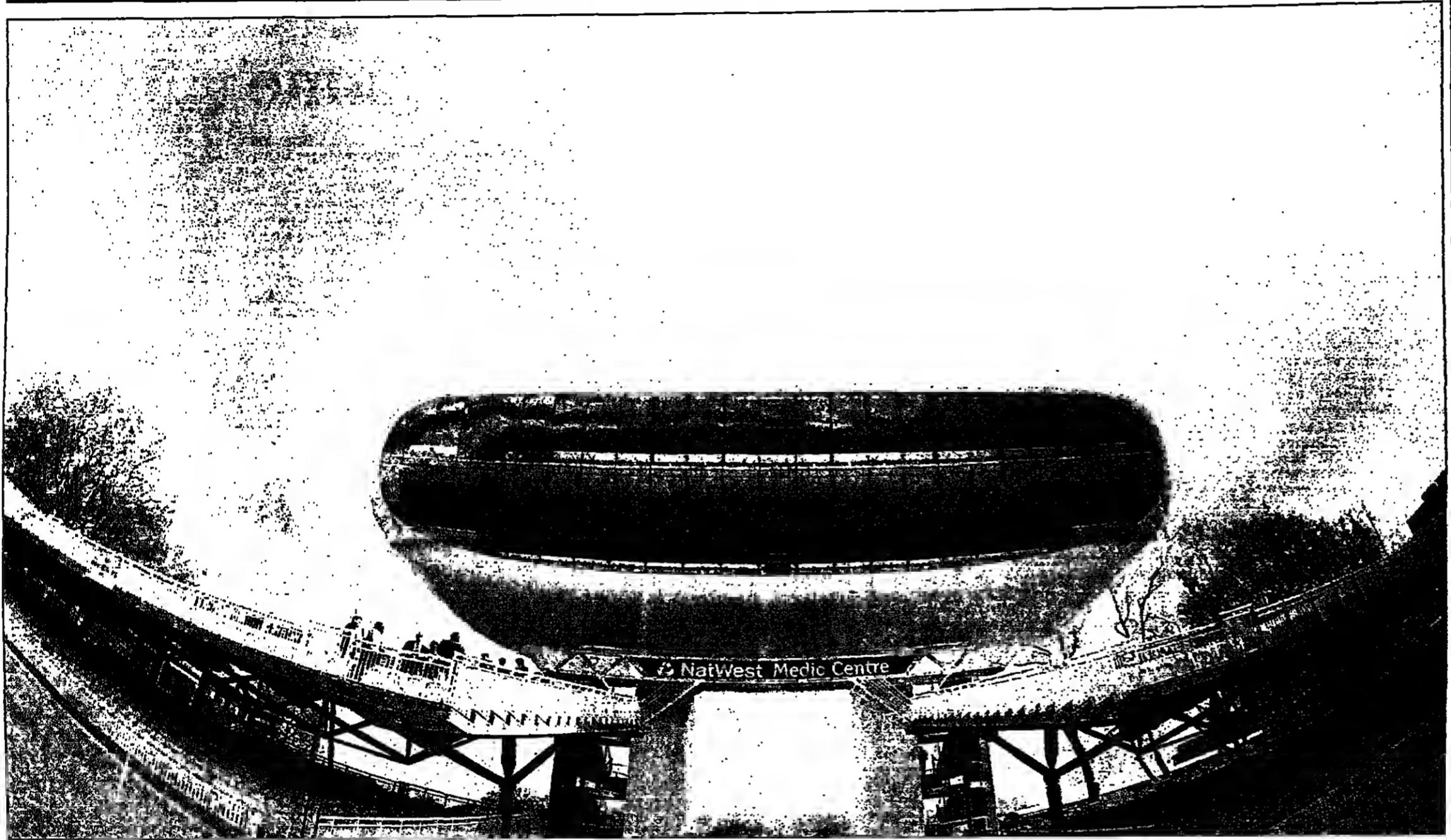
Phillips pursues dream ending, page 24

ability stuck on the wing and, with Butt, Sherwood and Barry behind him, he should receive plenty of possession.

"Maccs has got to be a free spirit," said Keegan. "Ask him to do a specific job and he'll try but it takes so much away from him. The way we are going to play will allow him the freedom to express himself. Any player who can go past people and create things you have to look at, because they are special. I'm also sure he feels he has something to prove at this level."

Despite the friendly status of this international, Keegan expects the opposition to be enthusiastic and will demand the same of his own side.

"Every game matters," he said.



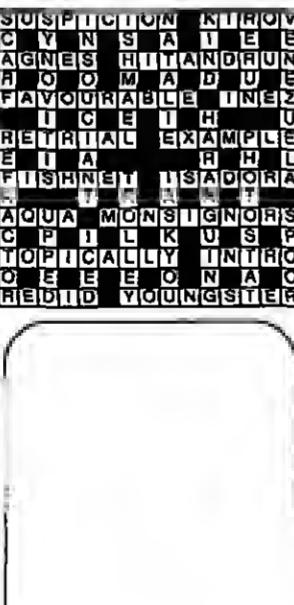
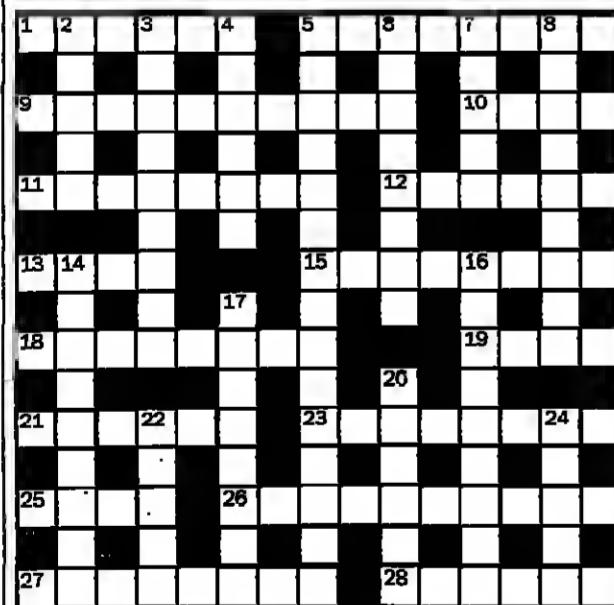
Room with a view: The new press facilities at Lord's, likened by some to a spaceship on stilts, was officially opened by the MCC's president, Tony Lewis, yesterday

Allsport

THE WEDNESDAY CROSSWORD

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Tuesday's Solution



Spaceship takes off at Lord's

THE OPENING of the new NatWest media centre at Lord's, designed by Jan Kaplicky and his wife, Amanda Levete, has turned this cricketing corner of NW3 into a veritable gallery of bold architecture. A triumph of both form and function, it offers up to 200 journalists a stunning vantage point that should remove the need for educated guesses – of whether Bloggs was undone by an off-break or an arm ball – to be made.

As the latest of several stunning new buildings that have

appeared at headquarters over

CRICKET
BY DEREK PRINGLE

the last decade, and with women now allowed to join the club, few can doubt the MCC's willingness to embrace the new. Indeed, as Levete herself put it: "The MCC are obviously visionaries, having given the job to a bloody foreigner and a skirt."

The giant curved structure, which many have already

likened to a spaceship on stilts,

was in fact inspired by cricket

equipment. According to

Kaplicky, the idea came after looking at hats and batting helmets.

Most may find that a difficult mental leap to make, but Kaplicky is a Czech who managed to get out when the tanks rolled into Prague during 1989. Staring down the barrel, especially if it is 85mm, tends to make you view things in a different way.

Built at a cost of £5.8m, approximately half of which was put up by NatWest, the building owes much to aircraft technology and the use of aluminium and glass. At first sight many may consider it slightly garish

standing directly opposite the Victorian pavilion, finished in 1890. However, Kaplicky felt that, too, would probably have been considered bold for its period, particularly the large windows of the Long Room.

For once, though, Tony Lewis, the president of the MCC, was probably speaking for the majority when he paid tribute to the building. "We believe this architecture is a signal for the country and it complements a ground where every cricketer in the world wants to play," he said.

■ Akram confident, page 21

Aussie players face the beer facts

BY DAVE HADFIELD

THERE IS sobering news for Australia's sozzled rugby league players. Clubs are to test for blood alcohol levels after a series of incidents have shown that their highly-paid athletes just cannot hold their drink. The latest revelation, that the Australian Test captain, Brad Fittler, who admits to being a "none or 100 beers drinker", was dumped unconscious outside a police station by a taxi driver after a harbour cruise that left him unable to remember his address, follows a series of other booze-fuelled embarrassments.

Before the season started, four North Sydney players were fined after a night club brawl in Wagga Wagga while South Sydney's Julian O'Neill was suspended and given counselling after trashing a motel room.

However, the League's chief executive ruled out a complete alcohol ban. "Prohibition hasn't worked ever," Neil Whittaker said. "We're not talking about enlisting an army of people to continually catch players out. The game is being let down by a reckless few who are taking all the kudos away from what's happening on the field."

"It's not an issue unique to rugby league, but like other issues we intend to get on top of it. Players must realise they are role models for thousands of people and should adjust their behaviour accordingly."

The game in Britain, often condemned by Australians as being played by pot-bellied forwards too fond of their beers, has, by comparison, been having a quiet night in, although the Great Britain internationals,

Bobbie Goulding and Brian McDermott, and the Wigan hooker, Jon Clarke, have all faced recent assault charges over separate alcohol-related incidents.

At the other end of the scale, St Helens' teetotal coach, Ellery Hanley, imposed a complete ban on alcohol for three weeks over Easter. Saints are currently top of Super League.

Cricket's drink problem, meanwhile, centres on spectators rather than players. Recent one-day matches between West Indies and the touring Australians have been disrupted by fans. Sussex are to operate a strict no-alcohol policy when South Africa play India in the World Cup at Hove on 15 May. The county is taking all possible measures to ensure that the game, already a 6,500 sell-out, passes off peacefully.



Hodgson: back in Italy

BUSINESS REVIEW

LIFFE AFTER DEATH

HOW BRIAN WILLIAMSON HAS GIVEN HOPE TO THE LONDON FUTURES EXCHANGE



Inside: The Welsh Wizard who cast a spell on Sony, 4
How Lara Croft made a man of Charles Cornwall, 5
A toast to the brewer's brewer, 6

Plus: Hamish McRae, Diane Coyle,
Derek Pain, Jonathan Davis and The Trader

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Edith Piaf

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Telecom mergers begin to border on a frenzy

IT'S MERGER mania in telecoms. Well, it's merger mania in several other sectors too, including oil, autos and financial services, but the revolution in the structure of the global telecommunications industry has a special urgency unparalleled elsewhere.

Indeed, the changes in ownership are coming so bewilderingly quickly that it is hard to grasp what the new structure of the industry might be in, say, 10 years' time. It is still harder to figure out the social and economic consequences of such rapid change.

The jumble of information, plans, ideas and rumours has become particularly tangled over the last few days. There are big, straightforward deals such as the bid by AT&T for MediaOne, or the earlier take-over by Vodafone of AirTouch. There are big, amorphous deals such as the tie-up between AT&T and BT on the one hand and Japan Telecom on the other. And there are big, nightmare deals such as the proposed Deutsche Telekom/Telecom Italia deal.

I don't think I can recall any other

proposed liaison that has attracted the "marriage made in hell" label quite so swiftly, and it would be astounding if the deal were to go through, let alone a success. But the very fact that people come up with deals that ignore the cultural dimension in business, shows the fury of the tempest that is sweeping across the industry.

Let's try to sort out what's happening. There are, I suggest, four quite separate elements to the telecoms revolution.

First is deregulation/privatisation. An industry where structural change has been held up by a combination of regulation and state ownership is cramming 10 or more years of restructuring into as many months.

Second is a rapid fall in the cost of production, brought about mainly by the switch from copper to fibre optics, but also by other changes such as the falling cost of satellites.

Third is the development of new technologies, which have turned mobile communications from a niche market into a mass one.

And finally there has been a

surge in demand from data traffic. The internet boom means that telephony will, in the space of one decade, shift from being a medium for transmitting speech to one for transmitting data.

The changes are related. For example, the pressure for deregulation has come largely from the changing pattern of demand and the development of mobile communications. The surge in demand could not have been accommodated had there not also been a technical change, which created much more supply.

But the forces for change are separate. There was, after all, a surge in mobile communications before the medium switched from analogue to digital. So in thinking through the new structure of the industry you are best to begin by looking at each of these factors.

Regulation: it is hard to see any significant barriers remaining for long, because the competitive nature of the business is such that ways will be found to get round them. For example, while national phone monopolies may notion-

ally remain, they won't matter much in competitive terms. If prices of fixed-line connects remain out of line, users will switch to mobile, where costs are plunging and technology is racing forward.

So the barriers to restructuring won't be regulation or ownership but rather culture and language.

You can see this already. The barriers to the German/Italian tie-up are cultural: who will run the show and how many people in which country are going to be sacked?

Next, the falling cost of producing a telecommunications service: here, I believe the collapse in transmission charges has hardly begun. Calls anywhere in the world are already effectively free on the Internet, for example.

Consider what has happened to the hotel telephone. Hotels have traditionally charged large sums for using the phone by the bed - but GSM technology means we now use our mobiles instead. Even the premium for mobility will disappear, and as it does it is perfectly possible that voice traffic will transfer almost entirely to mobiles. If

this is right, the industry is going to see much of its present revenue stream cut away.

Within a decade telecommunications will be so cheap that we won't even think about them. If that is tough for the industry, it will also be fascinating in social and economic terms for the rest of us.

Mobility: at the moment telecom groups that are primarily fixed-line are larger than those that are primarily mobile. It is at least plausible that this will change, and that having a line into a home or office will cease to be an advantage. Having a billing relationship may even cease to matter: for if prices come down enough we may buy our calls as pre-paid phone cards from the supermarket.

We know that users like mobility, so there ought to be some premium for it. What we don't know is how large that will be and whether a purchase relationship will be more appropriate than a billing one.

Finally, data traffic: yes, it will carry on its explosive growth for several years, maybe a genera-

tion, before it too becomes a mature business and yes, there will be some money in carrying the data because the volumes will grow so rapidly. But this is a commodity business, not a high-value-added one, so the money will be made only by groups that are globally the lowest-cost producers. The inevitable result will be many more global mergers and partnerships.

What are the structural implications of all this? I don't think it is

possible to do more than guess at

the appropriate structure for the industry 10 years hence, except to say

that the companies will have to

strive to be either low-cost giants

or clever niche players.

Look, for example, at the motor

industry. The barriers in the path

of the trend towards this motor in-

dustry model will be cultural and

national. To what extent does a

country accept the idea of its com-

munications being provided by a

foreign multinational? If the motor

industry is any guide, not much.

Maybe the problem with that

German/Italian job is that it is

about a decade before its time.

An industry where structural change has been held up by a combination of regulation and state ownership is cramming 10 or more years of restructuring into as many months

HAMISH MCRAE

DATELINE: VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Danube trade is the latest casualty of war

BY HANNAH CLEAVER

FOR a shipping man, Herbert Petschnig is spending an inordinate amount of time dealing with trains and lorries.

The managing director of Austria's main shipping company DDSG Cargo, has a big problem. Nato's bombing of bridges over the Danube in Serbia has sent tons of rubble into the water, blocking the river and much of his business. Of Mr Petschnig's 152 boats, more than 60 have been stranded around Novi Sad in Yugoslavia; 33 are in Romania, 13 are in Hungary and 12 are stuck without cargo or anywhere to go in Austria and southern Germany.

His priority is keeping business going until the end of fighting allows the river to be reopened. This involves expensive operations in Hungary and Romania, moving goods off the ships and on to trains and trucks. It costs three times more to transport goods by rail than by river, and seven times more to take them by road. At least 20,000 tons of grain, animal feed and other agricultural products have already been transferred to trains, but all the coal and iron ore is still stuck on barges in Romania.

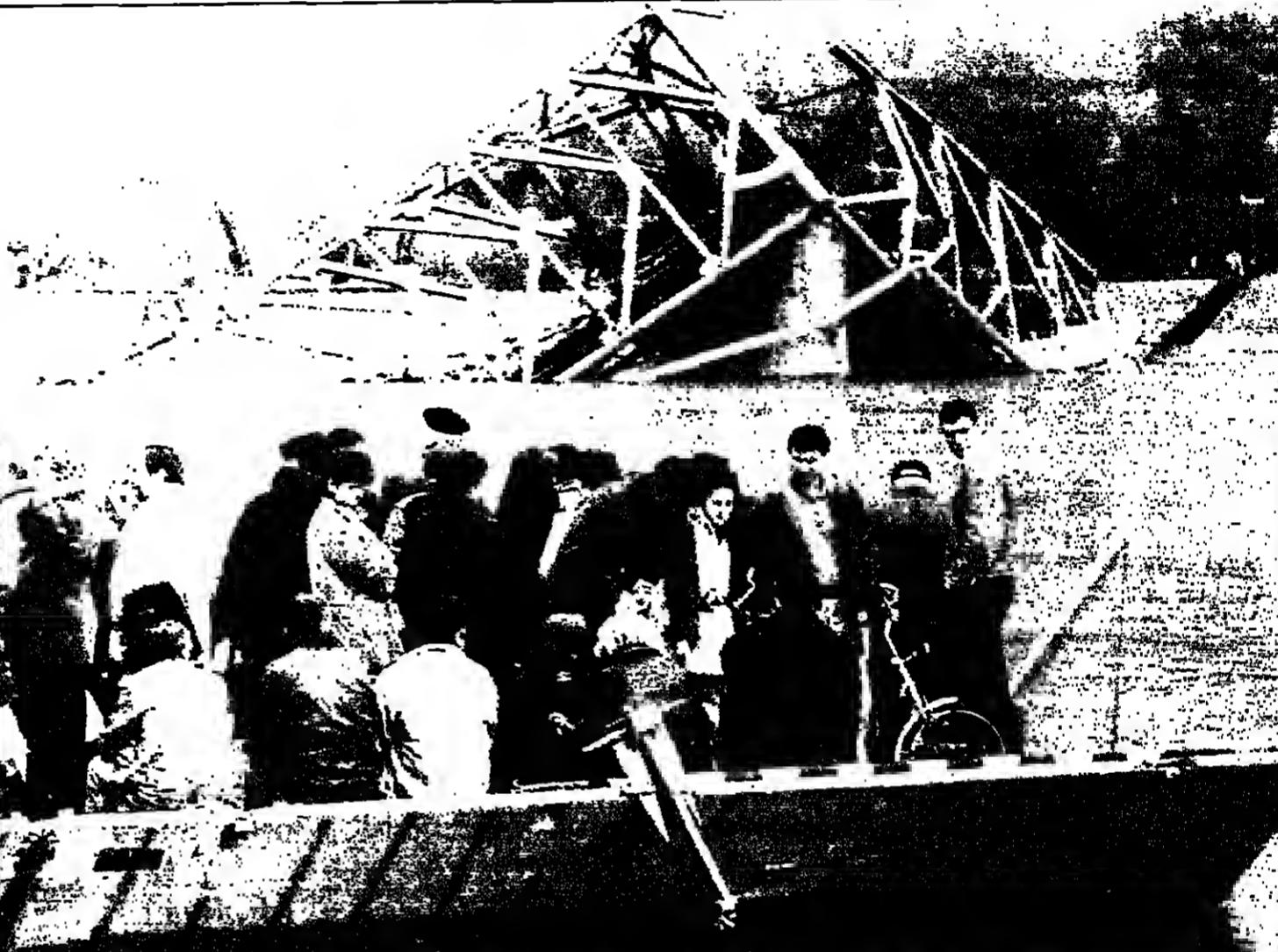
"You can certainly say it has been a terrible month," said Mr Petschnig. "And it is likely to be a terrible year." Daily losses are running at over 1m schillings (£250,000) a day. Industrial giant Voest-Alpine Stahl, the country's main steel producer, needs 150,000 tons of iron ore each month, most of which comes from Ukraine. Rather than being shipped up the Danube, the ore is now being transported by rail, said a spokesman.

Conversations between those in the shipping business are already turning to the question of who will finance the clearance of the river. Mr Petschnig fears he and fellow shippers will have to foot the bill. "The Yugoslavs will say, 'We didn't destroy them', so it will be up to us to pay for it," he said.

Danube countries have already accepted that Yugoslavia will be in no financial position to rebuild the bridges itself - and certainly not within the necessary time-scale. The Danube Commission of 10 countries with strong interests in the river ended a week-long assembly in Budapest, Hungary, last weekend by agreeing that member states should help to clean and clear the Yugoslav section of the river. But the commission, now headed by the Austrian representative Hannes Porias, said it would expect to work closely with international organisations and financial institutions when restoring the Danube.

If nothing else, the member states have time: the bombing shows little sign of abating. Nato planes hit targets in Novi Sad this week, reportedly making the last Danube bridge impassable for lorries and trains.

The Danube has always been one of the most important waterways in Europe. Traffic peaked in 1987 at 190 million tons but declined after the break-up of the Soviet Union and was further hit by sanctions against Yugoslavia during the Bosnian war. By 1994 annual traffic had fallen to 15 million tons. The river stretches from southern Germany, through



Businesses all along the river Danube have suffered from Nato's destruction of bridges in Serbia

Austria and then south and east through Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldova and the Ukraine. Ships and barges take grains and soya from west to east, passing loads of iron ore and coal going the opposite way. The latter makes up the lion's share of the traffic - an economic lifeline to emerging economies in the former Eastern Bloc.

River transport has received official encouragement from politicians keen to reduce expensive and environmentally damaging lorry traffic. Before the latest fighting, analysts had predicted growth in

Danube traffic of 1.5 per cent per year for the next 15 years.

A big share of this would come from emerging economies east of Vienna but these are the areas most badly affected by the blockage, and the ones that can least afford the dip in trade. About 65 per cent of Bulgaria's exports are transported on the river. Moving the cargo - most of it bulky minerals and fuels - by road and rail has already cost the country an estimated \$6.3m (£3.8m).

In Romania, the Transport Ministry reported that broken contracts on stranded vessels could cost \$2.8m a month, while the country's largest

shipping company, state-run Navrom, said it stood to lose about \$25m this year from the loss of Danube traffic. The fear is that if the river is not reopened soon, Romanian trade will become utterly uncompetitive. A statement from the Industry Ministry says exports could become almost impossible because of a four to seven-fold increase in transport costs.

The problems for Vienna are immediate rather than long-term. As one of the richest countries in Europe, Austria can afford to lose a few million US dollars a month while the Danube is blocked. And although this

and probably next year are likely to be bad ones for DDSG Cargo, Mr Petschnig said the longer-term future for Danube traffic remained bright. "If the clearance is fast and effective we could win our customers back on to the water. The roads and railways are increasingly busy and the waterways still have great potential for transport. But the next two years will be very, very difficult," he said.

The biggest concern is not the temporary loss of Danube shipping but the fear that the vulnerable emerging economies from which Vienna and Austria profit could be seriously damaged by the blockage.

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On the proposed merger between Deutsche Telekom and Telecom Italia

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BARRON'S
Analysts are pondering the revival of interest in industrial cyclicals

FORBES
There is European hostility to US bids to buy up asset-rich companies

FORTUNE
Western investment is beginning to flood into the Japanese markets

GROWING EUPHORIA over Asia's economic rebound is starting to echo the exuberance of the days just before its crash. Stock markets in Hong Kong and Seoul are nearly back to their all-time highs. The message is that Asia is "fixed" and we can all pick up where we left off nearly two years ago. Wrong. The critical regulatory and economic reforms needed to sustain a rebound are only half-done. Unless they are completed, hopes of reviving double-digit growth are misguided. Thailand has bottomed out. Indonesia remains a political powder keg. And Malaysia has implemented little economic reforms.

The strength of Asia's two biggest economies - Japan and China - is also in doubt. The IMF expects Japan's economy to shrink again in 1999. Meanwhile, China's economy is being kept afloat by enormous public-works spending. With state enterprises shedding millions of workers, exports weak, and its banks in trouble, China is struggling to maintain growth.

- Editorial comment

THIS DEAL should not go ahead. And there remains a good chance that it will not. There is much to negotiate between the firms, and the competition authorities in Europe and America will want to study the merger closely.

The Italian government has a golden share, giving it a right of veto over such momentous decisions. But the real choice rests with the German government, which still owns 74 per cent of the privatised company.

Like many of Europe's recently privatised monopolies, Deutsche Telekom is neither fish nor fowl. It is a private company and thinks like a branch of the civil service. The government's instinct to entrench the firm's independence by seeming to stand back is understandable. But for the majority shareholder to pretend neutrality in a bid like this would be a mistake. If the government simply votes its shares the way that Telekom's managers ask it to, the board will have total power. That is a recipe for the self-aggrandising coup that this merger represents.

- Editorial comment

THE POINTS for investors to focus on are mercifully simple. In the short term there may be a scramble for stock as the new Anglo looks bound to join the FTSE 100 Index in late June. The shares are tightly held by De Beers and Oppenheimer interests. Yet the company will carry its full weighting in the index and no new shares are being issued.

More seriously, the argument for mining shares is that the metal prices must be somewhere near the bottom of the cycle. And South Africans are rated well below their North American counterparts. But there are good reasons for a discount, at least in Anglo's case. Although its platinum strength is a plus, the diamond market is rigged and opaque. And even if South Africa surmounts its political and economic problems, recovery in the rand would squeeze Anglo's margins. Buying off the old Anglo shares in Johannesburg has been very lucrative recently: the shares are 75 per cent above their year end level.

- Editorial comment

AT SOME POINT over the next five years the US economy may falter. But the setback is likely to be short-lived, and the long-term expansion that began in 1982 should persist. And over the same time frame the economies of the rest of the world will be in much better shape than today.

That scenario for the global economy seems more plausible than any other - far more so than the thick gloom that pervaded the analyst community only six months ago. And it perhaps best explains the sudden revival of industrial cyclical stocks.

Analysts have been reluctant to view the industrial cyclical as buying candidates. And to get back to bleak reality, while earnings have generally been looking better for these stocks one must bear in mind that almost all of the board earnings are projected to be flat to lower for 1999.

It may be premature to start buying these stocks. But timing is always a fine art and, especially with a five-year outlook, it's better to be too early than too late.

- Gene Epstein, staff writer

A MONTH ago Guy Wyser-Pratte arrived with his wife at Paris' Charles de Gaulle airport on a routine business trip from New York. They were stopped at customs by brusque officials who held them for half an hour in a bare room and went through everything in their bags before releasing them without a word of explanation.

Wyser-Pratte can't prove it but he's sure that the search was orchestrated by a politically connected executive at one of the many companies that he's targeted for restructuring in recent years. This much is certain. As head of New York-based Wyser-Pratte & Co with some \$500m (£315m) in assets under management to invest in poorly managed companies Guy Wyser-Pratte is *persona non grata* in some of Europe's finest drawing rooms.

Wyser-Pratte and other pioneers are beginning to reap big profits by taking minority stakes in asset-rich, poorly managed companies outside the US and forcing management to unlock their hidden values.

- Justin Doebele, staff writer

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM has it that there are some great deals to be done in Japan these days. Last year foreign firms spent a record \$6.9bn (£4.3bn) acquiring Japanese companies: a six-fold increase over 1997, according to KPMG. Yet there is change afoot in Japan but the numbers are deceptive. Has the purchaser bought gold or dross?

In fact most of what the foreigners have bought so far are prestigious names attached to sick, debt-laden institutions. As Daimler-Chrysler discovered recently when it walked away from merger talks with troubled Nissan Motors, it's sometimes hard to figure out where the timebombs are inside a Japanese company.

It's understandable that Western dealmakers are attracted to Japan. But to many Japanese such thinking is a threat. What will force Japan to change its attitude? More hard times. Today Japanese corporations still rely on close relationships with a "main bank". For that particular institution the beginning of the end is in sight.

- Michael Zelenziger, of Knight Ridder



Despite the harsh reality of the global market place, Brian Williamson is optimistic: 'London is vibrant. It does a majority of forward-rate dealing in the yen, dollar, euro. It just has to get its act together' Kalpesh Lathigra

The bright side of Liffe

BY ANDREW GARFIELD

It was Liffe, but not as the traders in their flash jackets once knew it. The London International Financial Futures Exchange was being dealt off the floor by its rivals, and all it could look forward to was a slow, humiliating death. But six months after the arrival of the sober-suited Brian Williamson, and with help from the unfashionable euro, Liffe is starting to look up again

WHEN BRIAN Williamson was persuaded to return after an absence of 10 years to head up Liffe, the London futures exchange, few people gave him much of a chance. It was a brave thing to do, it was widely said in the City, but essentially the battle had already been lost. Over the previous two years, trading in Europe's biggest volume futures contract, the benchmark bond, had tattered and migrated almost to its entirety from the hand-waving brightly coloured jackets of Liffe's trading floor to the electronic screen-based dealing system of the Frankfurt-based Eurex.

For years, Liffe had deluded itself into thinking that its "open outcry" method of face-to-face trading, was the only way to run a futures market. A mixture of arrogance and powerful vested interest made it impervious to change. When Frankfurt launched its electronic trading screens, Liffe was there for the taking, and as its main claim to be a genuinely international exchange, the bond contract, seeped away, Liffe seemed destined for the second division - or worse. Liffe, in the view of many, was caught in a time warp and destined for irrelevance.

The picture today could hardly be more different. Just six months after Mr Williamson took back the helm, Liffe is back on the map.

What should have been the final nail in its coffin, the advent of the euro, has instead brought about a renaissance in its affairs. From a standing start Liffe has captured nearly 90 per cent of the trade in the benchmark euro interest future, the Eurobor contract with more than 2 trillion euro's worth of business traded through the exchange. The London futures market is again making the running against competition not just from the Germans, but from the fragmented American futures exchanges, who for once are running to catch up.

But Liffe, Mr Williamson insists, is not out of the woods yet. "I thought there was one year in which to secure the future of the exchange," he says. "I don't think we will really know whether it has a future and where it lies until that year is complete."

Eurex still dominates the long-end of the Euro derivatives market, while Liffe has yet successfully to complete the transition into the computer age. Yet, there is an optimism in the London market today which is such a far cry from the gloom and despondency which ruled last summer that the two beasts are barely recognisable as one and the same.

Grabbing the entire Euro money market futures business from under the noses of the Germans and Liffe's French rival Matif within weeks of the euro's launch, was Mr Williamson's acknowledgement, a significant victory. "That was the first time I realised we had a real chance not just of saving the exchange but of actually re-establishing our past success."

Mr Williamson, a dapper, 53-year-old whose conventional City look and accent belie an unorthodox approach, was one of the driving forces in setting up the exchange in the teeth of entrenched City op-

position nearly two decades ago. Within weeks of his return to Liffe's Cannon Street headquarters, the sense of change was palpable. "He has done what good leaders do," says Mathew Fosh, of brokers SGF Futures & Options. "He has given Liffe confidence in the future."

That future has come to hold a crucial symbolic importance for the City of London, as it agonises about its place in a European and global market place where speed and efficiency count for rather more than the old school tie. For years, the success of Liffe with its colourfully plumed traders, muttering equally colourful expletives as they barked out prices in German or Italian government bond futures, appeared to silence the doubts.

When all that crumbled last summer, after the Swiss-German Eurex took control of the bond futures market, it seemed the pessimists, who said the single currency heralded the end of London's role as Europe's financial centre, were right. To Mr Williamson it was clear Liffe was heading for serious problems: "In this market, you can't be arrogant, you can't be alone, you can't be aloof. For a while Liffe was all three."

Towards the end of the chairmanship of his predecessor Jack Wrigglesworth, he says it was obvious "radical change was necessary". In particular, Mr Williamson believed, Liffe needed a "commercial edge", an odd thing for a market operating at the frontiers of financial trade not to have, but all too plainly lacking at Liffe.

Immediately after taking charge of Liffe in August, Mr Williamson embarked on a lightning tour of Liffe's big institutional customers in an effort to find out what it would take to win their confidence back.

Listening to what the customers want is hardly business rocket science, but it was something that had fallen into sad neglect at Liffe. One of his first moves was to appoint a chief executive, the South African Hugh Freedberg to take charge of day to day management, freeing time to concentrate on big picture issues. He also drafted in a host of City figures including Sir Brian Pitman, chairman of Lloyds-TSB, the clearing bank, Christopher Sharples from GNI, the broking house, and David Hardy, head of the London Clearing House. Within weeks, this so-called Fast Progress Group had come up with an action plan for

reversing Liffe's decline. Eurex had stolen a march by being first out of the traps with a screen-based trading system which was cheaper than Liffe and allowed dealing from almost anywhere around the globe. Eurex also benefited from the backing of the big German banks and the political sponsorship of the German government.

Liffe, which had been able to get away with charging what it liked by virtue of its former stranglehold over the European derivatives market, first had to get a grip on costs.

Secondly, it had to grasp the nettle of technology, which it had repeatedly ducked. That meant accelerating the development of its screen-based trading system, Liffe Connect, and, hardest of all, waving goodbye to the trading pits, which to the outside world are the visible face of Liffe and the City. To survive, Liffe would have to become leaner, fitter and cheaper.

Since November, when Mr Williamson announced that 60 per cent of Liffe's 1000 staff would have to go, more than a third of Liffe's 20 trading pits have closed. Last week Liffe's gilts futures pit was shut. In two weeks the FTSE 100, 250 index futures pits close, leaving the exchange with five times as much real estate on its hands than it will need. By the time the process is over Liffe will have cut its costs by more than a half compared with last year.

Liffe's board has been streamlined and the Exchange's shareholding structure changed to allow outside investors to participate, a first step towards an eventual goal of a stock market flotation. Liffe will no longer be a club of exchange members, but a commercial company whose ability to fund development will depend on its success in producing results.

As Liffe grows in confidence once more,

attention has begun to focus again on the failings of its competitors. Eurex, which a year ago steamrollered all before it, has had its setbacks these past few months. In January a traders' revolt at the Chicago Board of Trade, led to the Windy City's premier derivatives exchange tearing up an agreement to form an alliance with Eurex and opting to go alone.

Eurex's customers too have started to defect. Critics say Eurex's computer trading system, now several years old, is creaking under the strain. There are mutterings about whether Eurex's bureaucratic settlement and clearing system is up to the task of processing the volumes required.

Even in the industry think Chicago, once the world derivatives capital, is also riding for a fall. David Brennan, the new chairman of the CBOT may be about to repeat the mistakes Liffe made several years ago when, because of pressure from floor traders, it insisted on clinging to its open outcry traditions while others plunged headlong into the technology game.

The traditional duopoly of the Chicago Board of Trade and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange is threatened by a new private sector initiative from Cantor Fitzgerald, the brokerage which wants to launch its own exchange.

For those displaced by the changes, life has been tough. The hardest hurdle to overcome has been the psychological one of ditching what to many has been the heart and soul of Liffe since it was launched in the heady days of the early 1980s. Looking back, it is hard to remember the ridicule which first accompanied the appearance on the streets of the City of the Liffe traders, with their trademark blazers, hand signals and sharp-witted, barrow boy terminology.

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when the stock exchange was a seething pit of jobbers sporting top hats, believes the passage of the stereotypical Liffe trader is inevitable. "London has always been primarily an institutional market," he says.

These days markets are expected to operate through "open systems", not closed proprietary methods, hardware and spaces - the idea being that trading houses will buy their own computer hardware and have prices piped in from a variety of sources. Mr Williamson reckons this is the real challenge ahead for the derivatives exchanges. Rather than pushing its own trading system exclusively, it has signed up with 15 software providers so that its Liffe Connect system can be offered to anyone with a desktop PC.

Another issue is that publicly traded contracts such as stock exchange or currency futures are now a small proportion of total derivatives business. The big growth area is so-called over-the-counter derivatives, tailor-made instruments like swaps, which allow institutions to hedge interest rate risk. The bulk of these are offered by banks to other banks and financial institutions, rather than through exchanges.

The drawback is that these contracts are only as good as the bank you bought them from, whereas exchange-traded contracts are guaranteed by the exchange and can be freely bought and sold without risk of default.

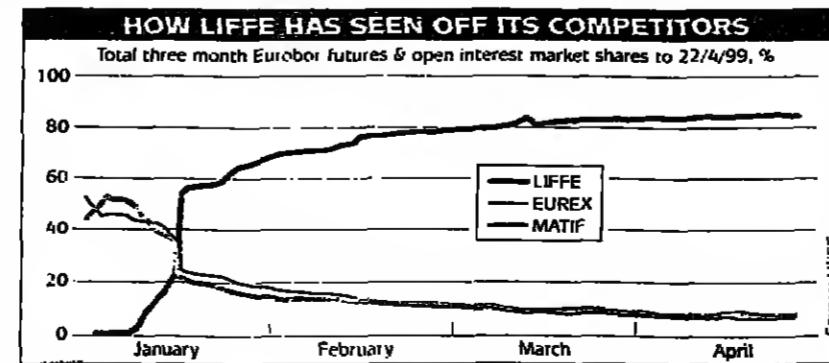
Mr Williamson's ambition is to offer exchange versions of these products.

Finally, there is also the issue - banal to the outsider - of clearing. The corollary of being able to trade at the flick of the switch, is that someone is at hand to make sure that at the end of the day everything balances up. What banks want more than anything these days is centralised global clearing, so that trades done on one exchange can be matched with trades on another exchange. Mr Williamson believes if anyone can provide that service it is London, the only financial centre in the world.

New York included, which is comfortable dealing with the demands of a truly international client base. Mathew Fosh of SFG says if he can resolve this problem, he will have found the financial markets equivalent of the Holy Grail.

The harsh reality Mr Williamson faces is that in a global market place, exchanges are no longer about having a physical presence, buildings, traders, history, or a culture, but about providing services to a footloose clientele more effectively than anyone else. "Change," says Mr Fosh, "is inevitable. What the exchanges will end up being is IT houses with product capability." Mr Williamson sees that as an opportunity, not a threat. "I am optimistic. The reason I am optimistic is that all the people who do the business are in London. London is such a vibrant place. It does a majority of forward rate dealing in the yen, dollar, euro.

"London has a great opportunity to have settlement in equity, bond, derivatives markets, all together. All the people who do that business are here. London just has to get its act together."



Consensus should apply to both rich and poor

IT WAS at a conference in 1990, sponsored by the prestigious Institute for International Economics, that the term "Washington Consensus" was coined. This was a collection of policy prescriptions for developing economies which were squarely in the tradition of orthodox economics: sound government finances, liberalisation of trade and investment, privatisation, deregulation, and so on.

It was a received wisdom that was probably never widely enough shared to deserve the term consensus, even though most governments in most parts of the world put its precepts into practice throughout the 1990s. But since the financial crisis of last summer, the Washington consensus has looked a bit threadbare. The tigers of South-east Asia had embraced it wholeheartedly and yet many of them still plunged into crisis.

A new World Bank publication has ridden to the rescue. Called "Beyond the Washington Consensus: Institutions Matter", it concludes that the standard policy

recommendations were not wrong, just incomplete. Critics will say this is a bid by one of the Big Brother institutions of the world economy to alter the content of the consensus while keeping the Washington bit intact. For the World Bank still has a shopping list of appropriate policies for emerging economies.

But it is worth looking at the lessons drawn from the crisis given that the original Washington consensus did generate such spectacular growth in the countries that embraced it. The new report concludes that the mistake was to overlook the importance of the institutional structure of economies. The sound macroeconomic policies were applied regardless of the historical and cultural context of individual economies as if there really were such as thing as a pure free market. Of course there is not, and it seems mad that anybody could have imagined otherwise. But it is not that obvious, except with hindsight, that there is any link between the need for a small government budget deficit and, say

This does not just mean the tendency of eminent politicians to appoint members of their family and



DIANE COYLE

If this is crony capitalism, it is an ailment that does not just afflict developing countries

the regulation of the banking system or the types of contract on which civil servants are employed. The report summarises research on the links between certain types of institutions in developing economies and their growth rates and poverty levels. The results are unsurprising. Respect for property rights, honest civil servants and politicians, protection of investors' and depositors' rights, and so on, are all correlated with higher GDP and lower poverty and inequality. There is a similar link with strong shareholder rights, such as allowing small shareholders to vote by proxy, not setting too high a threshold for the calling of exceptional shareholder meetings, and making it possible for shareholders to oust directors. So in this sense the World Bank vindicates the commonplace conclusion that, broadly speaking, "crony capitalism" was to blame for the severity of the east Asian crisis.

This does not just mean the tendency of eminent politicians to appoint members of their family and

of personnel and misty accounting standards. Even taking a narrower view of crony capitalism, the rich countries share with the developing countries many institutional problems. Russia is not alone in being plagued by the web of Mafia control ensnaring its businesses or by massive tax evasion; but Italy is a very wealthy country and Russia is not. Just recently the entire European Commission was forced to step down over allegations of fraud and mismanagement; the EU budget forms one of the world's biggest gravy trains. The Anglo-Saxons do not escape; after all the US has given us the phrase "pork barrel" politics.

Perhaps it is true, then, that in the end the rich are just different from the rest in having more money. The lesson seems to be that developing economies have to get their macroeconomic policies right (the first version of the Washington consensus); then their microeconomic policies and institutions right (the updated version). And then they need to get richer too, because that

is what really helps weather the storms of financial crisis.

But I think this would be too defeatist a conclusion. The World Bank's authors conclude that, just as the 1980s debt crisis spurred the afflicted countries to cut deficits, liberalise their trade rules and start privatisation programmes, the 1990s crisis will set in train a process of detailed institutional reform. Let's hope the developed economies should be busy applying the same logic to themselves as well as hectoring poorer countries about what they ought to do. For the same set of solutions might well help solve the different kinds of problems faced by different groups of countries. After all, a breath of free-market fresh air in Germany's jobs and capital markets might help reduce its seemingly permanently high unemployment rate. More equal access to education and healthcare in the US might give young men in its ghettos an alternative career to prison. There cannot be one Washington consensus for the poor and another for the rich.

FOCUS

The man with his finger on Sony's pulse

BY DAVID USBORNE

COULD IT be that Howard Stringer is hankering for a job in television again? It has been four years since the tall Welshman bid a teary farewell to CBS, the US network that he headed between 1988 and 1995 and which gave him his first job back in 1965. Last week, giving the keynote address to the annual National Association of Broadcasters Convention in Las Vegas, he admitted to pangs of nostalgia. "When I call CBS executives today, I have to spell my name to the receptionist," he lamented with a wry smile.

Let's consider this for a moment. How might we help Mr Stringer find his way back into an industry he is quite obviously missing? Which large broadcasting entity, not necessarily US-based but English-speaking, might be in the market for a new Number One, someone to steer it into the brave new digital age of the 21st Century? How about Director-General as his title, rather than president or CEO, Gosh, that's it - our very own Auntie, the BBC. He is from Cardiff, after all, notwithstanding his US citizenship, acquired in 1985. The guy could hardly be a more perfect fit.

Actually, we are a little behind the curve here. For several months, Mr Stringer has been the focus of gossip about a successor to Sir John Birt, who departs the Beeb in April next year. The mention of his name has provoked reactions ranging from "Yes, please" to "Howard who?". There have been some in the Corporation who have been panicked by the notion of Mr Stringer as Director-General, but probably that's because they have been confusing him with another British-born star from the US television universe, named Jerry Springer, a man whose meanderings through the sexual low life of the US of A would certainly give a whole new meaning to the notion of public service broadcasting.

Mr Stringer could hardly be more different. He has long qualified for membership of the Brits that made it big in New York club we so love to natter about. Somehow, though, our fascination has been directed more often at other paid-up members like Tina Brown, former editor of the

New Yorker, and her husband and long-ago Sunday Times and Times editor, Harold Evans. And yet Mr Stringer, in terms of sheer corporate ladder-climbing, is a far bigger cheese than any of them.

We are not just talking about his past success at CBS. From a South Wales background so cash-strapped that his RAF father could not afford a blazer for him when he won a scholarship to a posh private school, Mr Stringer is now ensconced atop the massive Sony building on New York's Madison Avenue. Indeed, since December, he has been chairman and CEO of Sony Corporation of America, making him number three in the global Sony empire. Understand that and ponder the pivotal role that Sony expects to play worldwide in turning all of our lives over from analogue to digital, and you might begin to wonder whether all this BBC talk isn't a little bit silly.

But we had to ask, and this was the response from Sony's New York PR. "Mr Stringer not long ago received a significant promotion at Sony Corporation of America. At the end of June, he will be named to the board of Sony Corporation. He knows nothing about the rumours regarding the BBC and has no comment". There didn't seem much point in asking for details about his salary; suffice it to say Sony will be paying 57-year-old Stringer rather more than the tax-payer-funded BBC could ever be able to manage.

Nor do we have any evidence, aside from the recent purchase of a modest pile in Oxfordshire, that Mr Stringer is ready to end his love affair with America, the seeds of which were sown during his student days at Merton College at Oxford University. There he mixed with Americans over in Britain on the Rhodes Scholarship programme and began dreaming of a life in the US. In 1965, he sailed to New York with £100 in his pocket. Job interviews eventually took him to CBS where was given the lowly position of log clerk. Then, just six weeks later, at the height of the Vietnam War, he was drafted.

One of the more endearing stories

about Stringer has him writing to Bobby Kennedy to grumble about his unexpected fate. He recently recalled saying in the letter: "Look I've been here for four months and you want me to die for you". Don't you think that's a little premature?". But the US law said it was quite proper for recruits to be non-commissioned and so Stringer was dispatched and ended up serving 10 months.

At the very end of his official Sony-issued CV it says: "He is a recipient of a US Army Commendation Medal for meritorious achievement for service in Vietnam (1965-67)." Other handy details: he is married to a dermatologist, Dr Jennifer A K Patterson, and has two children. The family lives in New York but also has a bolt-hole in the Hamptons on Long Island named Bear Cottage. This has nothing to do with Stringer's rugby-playing physique (he was captain of the Oxford team) but with his wife's collection of stuffed bears.

Returning from combat, Stringer once more found himself at CBS, where he was relentlessly scaled the ranks. Eventually he was to take charge of the Evening News with Dan Rather, helping it to regain viewer dominance over the news shows at ABC and NBC, as well as the network's current affairs division. Under his leadership, the documentary team won a slew of Emmy Awards. It was the then new owner of CBS, the industrialist, Laurence Tisch, who chose Mr Stringer as President of CBS Broadcasting in 1988.

At first, CBS fared brilliantly under

Mr Stringer. Despite being forced by

Mr Tisch into draconian job cuts, staff

remained loyal; his success in taking

the company from number three in

the prime-time ratings back to num-

ber one commanded respect. His

greatest moment came in 1993 when he poached late-night talk-show

legend David Letterman from NBC.

How he did it became the stuff of

legend in the industry. One of his

moves involved then CBS news

broadcaster, Connie Chung, whom

Letterman had jokingly fantasised

about on air: Mr Stringer persuaded

Ms Chung to tape a pretend segment

promising Letterman, in her most

languid voice, that she would mean



Howard Stringer was being tipped as the next Director-General of the BBC but he looks more at home at Sony

"Oh, Dave! Oh ... Dave!". whenever she made love to her husband on condition he joined CBS. Mr Stringer presents the tape to Letterman.

For Mr Stringer, it was the pinnacle of his career at CBS. In 1994 things started to unravel. Ratings had dramatically and the network suffered a huge setback when it lost the rights to broadcast National League Football games to a much bigger bid from Fox Broadcasting, owned by Rupert Murdoch. Depressed and fed up, Mr Stringer quit in early 1995.

When he was invited some of his closest colleagues to a farewell reception, Mr Stringer's normal gift for words reportedly abandoned him. After his speech, sat down and wept.

Mr Stringer had been lured away by Michael Ovitz, an old friend and head of the Creative Artists Agency in Los Angeles. What followed was a project called Tele-TV. Bankrolled by three telephone companies, Nynex, Bell Atlantic and PacTel, it was an ultimately ill-fated attempt to use telephone lines to deliver television and internet services to American homes. Mr Stringer once joked that he had given up CBS to be made "chief executive of a phone booth". Within two years, it was clear

that Tele-TV was doomed. But it had not been time entirely wasted. Mr Stringer, who while at CBS had famously poo-pooed interactivity and all things information super-highway

"I don't think we've found the entrance ramp yet", he once proudly proclaimed - had undergone an awakening at Tele-TV that prepared him well for life at Sony, which scooped him up in April 1997.

Its essence was this: that digital technology and the power of the computer chip were about to revolutionise our relationship with just about everything electronic in our homes: our computers, our televisions, our VCRs. Machines that once had separate functions, like PCs and TVs, were about to be fused. And the prize for those companies that saw it would be huge.

Sony, which makes 30 per cent of its sales in the US, has seen it for sure. In spite of Japan's economic turmoil, the company is in robust shape and is undergoing its own revolution. Helping to fund its success is the PlayStation, which accounts for just over a quarter of its revenues. Last month, Sony celebrated the sale of its 50 million PlayStation console and unveiled its successor PlayStation II.

Under its Tokyo-based President, Nobuyuki Idei - the man Mr Stringer reports to - Sony is set to take

its slice of the digital market.

Part of the change involves turning Sony into a company that is as

much committed to software as it

is to hardware. Indeed by the end of

next year it will have as many soft-

ware engineers as hardware de-

signers. But there is more to it than

this. It is anticipated that the new ap-

proach will eventually pit the cor-

poration - and Mr Stringer - against

Microsoft and its founder Bill Gates

"All of us", Mr Stringer remarked re-

cently, "are in a battle with Bill

Gates for the living room".

Just heating up is a gigantic strug-

gle between two competing visions.

In one corner is Mr Gates, who is bet-

ting that at the heart of every new-

digitised home will be a PC, equipped

with a Windows-based operating sys-

tem. Sony, with some other allies in

the electronics industry, sees a world

of smart gadgets, each with their own

brains. On your TV will be a Sony set-

top box, able to control the TV itself

- digital and equipped to raid the in-

ternet - your video recorder, hi-fi sys-

tem and even your computerised pet.

The new PlayStation would also join

the circus, working for instance, as a DTV player or indeed as the set-top box itself. Also in Sony's future, is a new operating system to be called Aperios. To be unveiled later this year, it will control digital TVs, cellular phones, any other gadget Sony dreams up. It will be Aperios versus Windows, Stringer versus Gates.

When Mr Stringer stood before the delegates at the broadcasting convention last week, it was not to share old times with them. Rather, he lectured them on the need to embrace the digital revolution. Directing his comments specifically at the net-works, he declared: "Digital TV is inevitable ... Digital TV will change the world. At Sony, we view the DTV as the command centre for a digital home network. We help you figure out lots of marvellous ways to make your business work better. And all we ask in return is that you stop crying in your chardonnay about lost share".

We have yet to hear Mr Stringer, rather than his PR ladies, ruling himself out from the Birt succession. But who are we kidding? Mr Stringer has done TV. Which would you find more interesting - the annual politicking over the licence fee, or taking on Bill Gates for control of our homes?

THE PLAYER: JOHN FINAN, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF WINTERTHUR LIFE UK

After an unfair share of the market

PERSONAL DETAILS: Age 60. Lives in Berkshire. Drives Jaguar XK8. Pay in 1997, excluding pension contributions, £253,000. Likes golf and boating.

CHALLENGE: Winterthur Life UK has grown by 700 per cent in the past seven years, but expenses have risen by just 6.5 per cent. The challenge is to maintain that momentum and to get our unfair share of the market, ours and somebody else's, says Mr Finan.

CORPORATE BACKGROUND: Joined Pearl Assurance as an agent in 1959. Rose within the company to the level of main board director. In 1988, he left

to become chief executive and deputy chairman of NEL Britannia, the insurance arm of Invesco MIM, formerly Britannia Arrow. In 1992, Mr Finan was made managing director of Provident Life, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Winterthur Swiss Insurance with assets of £30bn. In 1995, after over 100 years as Provident Life, the firm formally adopted the name of its parent company, Winterthur Life UK. Winterthur Group merged with Credit Suisse Group in 1997.

STRATEGY: To grow Winterthur's three divisions. Winterthur is the UK market

leader for self-invested personal pensions with around 50 per cent market share. Mr Finan says that the challenge is to consolidate and maintain leadership in this market. There has been rapid growth in the group pensions products business. Mr Finan sees scope for further substantial growth. Winterthur serves the largest number of independently owned tied estate agents. It has 10-year deals with most of its 1,000 branches. These include the Haart estate agency chain, formerly Woolwich Property Services. The strength of the housing market is seen as "a tremendous opportunity" for the business. Mr Finan says 44 per cent of owners could switch their mortgage and get a better deal. Winterthur has

set up a free personal financial services call centre offering renegotiation terms within 15 minutes. Mr Finan wants to expand into areas such as Individual Savings Accounts and personal loans. Mr Finan says the group is looking at flexible staff benefits and hours. PLANS: Winterthur Life is one of the fastest-growing insurance companies in the UK, with a 29 per cent return on capital and after-tax profits of £4m in 1997. Mr Finan is working with European colleagues on group and individual pensions and the group is on the lookout for mergers and acquisitions in the life and pensions sector.



American Express Services Europe Limited

Notification of Changes in Interest Rate Charges on American Express Credit Cards

American Express Europe Limited announces changes to monthly interest rates for American Express Credit Cards.

American Express Green Credit Card

For Cardmembers whose monthly interest rate for goods and services is 1.7%, the monthly rate is reduced to 1.48%. In the case of Cash Withdrawal, the interest rate will be charged at 1.42%.

American Express Gold Credit Card

For Cardmembers whose monthly interest rate for goods

BY JONATHAN MILLER

Those British guys: they have some neat ideas but they know nothing about business. Well, that's what the software industry said until Charles Cornwall bought the cyberbabe Lara Croft and turned Eidos into a force to be reckoned with

The profits of Tomb and gloom

NOW HERE'S a recipe for sleepless nights. Start in an industry - say computer software - where your competitors include the likes of Bill Gates's Microsoft and Sony Corporation. Bear in mind that British software companies have a reputation for being innovative, creative, exciting and hopeless at making money.

Next, specialise in computer game software, on the cutting edge of geek culture, which means you hire staff who don't know what a necktie is, who live on pizza and who would blend in seamlessly at a grunge-music festival.

Then market a range of products whose functionality is incomprehensible to all but adolescent and pre-adolescent males, few of them likely to have girlfriends - consumers whose fakeness is notorious and with the attention span of a gnat.

Finally, finance this brilliant scheme by raising venture capital in Britain, where venture capital doesn't even mean venture capital but management buy-outs, in a market whose investors are notoriously averse to risk, and where investors have been burnt.

Alternatively, lie down in a darkened room until the feeling passes. But wait: maybe not.

Eidos, the British computer games publisher of cyberbabe Lara Croft, heroine of the Tomb Raider series of computer games, is riding high and making money. Last October its share price was at a 13-month low of 595p. Since then the company has produced strong third-quarter numbers which show turnover in the nine months to December rose by 64 per cent up to £169m, producing a profit before tax up 149 per cent to £32.4m. As prospects brightened, the firm's core executives have been visiting 15 cities in seven countries, making 90 presentations to 120 institutions.

Their story seems to have convinced. Today, Eidos is flavour of the month among investment analysts who have watched the computer game business double in size in 36 months, seeing Eidos emerge as a champion performer among British software houses. The culture is as much West Coast American as British, despite the unlikely location of its offices in Wimbledon, a middle-class London suburb that could hardly be further removed from Silicon Valley's wild west frontiers of technology.

One executive's first day at work was spent in shock from his first view of the open-plan office packed with new colleagues in old clothes, unkempt and straggly-haired. "It's true some of these guys have probably not been close to a bar of soap for a while, but they're good at what they do," he says.

It was not ever thus. Four years ago, Eidos was a technology-led company attempting to cut a path in the arcane world of video compression - essentially, using software instead of expensive hardware to digitise images. When the chief executive, Charles Cornwall, arrived, the share price was roughly 50p. He liked the technology but despaired of it producing much in the

way of earnings. "We needed something else," he says. The answer was computer games.

Enter Lara Croft, the game that has gone on to sell more than 15 million copies worldwide. Other games, including Doom and Quake, have sold more but few rivals appear to have such long-term potential. This seems to be down largely to the incredible response of computer gamers to the character of Lara Croft herself, an Uzi-toting cyberbabe who lives in a baronial manor house and whose exploits have captivated millions of fans.

Lara was invented by a small design house called Core Design in Derby which Mr Cornwall promptly bought. Jeremy Heath-Smith, who founded Core Design, is now an executive director of Eidos. The highest-paid director of the company, he was paid £1.8 million last year and is now working on a fourth version of the game. Mr Cornwall, 36 and South African-born, has become a multi-millionaire, his 4 per cent shareholding now worth £15m, with options worth much more.

Yet the best analysts say may be to come, with Paramount preparing to start shooting a movie version of Lara Croft, Lord Sainsbury of Turville, the technology minister, hailing Lara Croft as an "ambassador for British scientific excellence" and Eidos using Lara's notoriety to lever itself into the first rank of computer game companies.

"Eidos is doing really well," says Jeff Kaye, editor-in-chief of CTW the computer game industry magazine. "They've exploited Lara well, and to get away from their reputation as a one-trick pony they're developing other titles including Championship Manager which has really blown everything else away. They've got a good team at the top and though the City has had a hard time trying to figure out how to value this kind of company, the analysts are beginning to understand them and they're pretty high on them."

Perhaps most surprising of all, Eidos has begun to disprove the rule that British innovation is incompatible with commercial success. "We're positive," says Robert Smithson, the Goldman Sachs sector analyst. "The secular trend is very good in the long term and the stock is cheap."

The secular trend, Mr Smithson explains, is that hardware sales keep growing. Eidos does not make hardware, but every time a games platform is sold, it gains potential customers. Although Mr Smithson acknowledges the volatility of the computer game product cycle, he believes that current trends Eidos profits and shares ought to keep growing.

Eidos makes games for two main platforms: the Sony Playstation game console of choice among the digerati, and the ubiquitous PC, which in its latest manifestations is also capable of rendering the rich graphics that are a hallmark of Eidos's offerings.

The company's real mitch cow is the Playstation, with 50 million sold worldwide. Sony controls manu-

facture of the cartridges used in the Playstation, but there is still plenty left over for Eidos. The gross margin on a sold game is close to 65 per cent.

The industry rumour is that Sony is about to slash the price of the console in the UK from £99 to £9. Sony's calculation is a classic "give away the razor, sell the blades" strategy. If the sums are right, this will be a big opportunity for Eidos. The typical Playstation customer buys eight games; trends show that some - perhaps the new Lara Croft game - will have the Eidos label. The price cut is preparation for next year's launch of the Playstation 2, a console 1,000 times more powerful than the present model.

Eidos has just won an award from Deloitte & Touche as the fastest-growing tech company in Britain. Up more than 200 per cent in six months, the shares still stand on what many regard as a relatively undemanding multiple of 14 times earnings.

Even Dresdner Kleinwort Benson, house broker to the company, wonders whether the story is "too good to be true", although it concludes that it is. Eidos shares reached £22.20 last week and volume and the number of quality investors are up.

Mr Cornwall says the key to the business is that it is led by content although the technology is a vital component. "We are a digital media company interested in the creation of original content more than anything else. Thanks to Lara, we have reached the critical mass to have the credibility to attract new content."

A manifestation of this has been the frantic pace at which Eidos has been buying smaller software companies around Britain and cutting deals with others, ones with innovative ideas but not necessarily the publishing skills to bring them to market. The latest deal, announced last week, was a long-term publishing agreement with Free Radical Design, based in Nottingham which started this year. The company is run by the team who built the successful Goldeye 007 game for Nintendo. Its first product for Eidos will be released next year. David Doak, their managing director, says: "Eidos is a long-term player with an enviable track record and a clear view of where the industry is headed. Their board was refreshingly open and direct. Their passion for games clinched it."

In February, Eidos did a similar deal with Elixir Studios, a London-based games developer established last year by Dennis Hassabis, who created a best-selling computer game called Theme Park when he was 16. Mr Hassabis wrote to 31 venture capital companies, but was offered meetings with only four. "As soon as they heard computer games they switched off," he says.

Mr Cornwall says the Elixir deal is the kind that will allow his company to continue to prosper in a hazardous market. "Yes, it is frustrating that venture capital is not understood in Britain but it is also an opportunity because this is a country with incredible talent. We have been



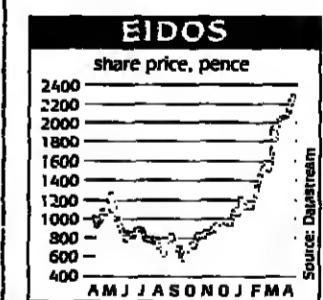
Lara Croft, hailed by the technology minister Lord Sainsbury of Turville as an 'ambassador for British scientific excellence'



Charles Cornwall (right), Jeremy Lewis and Mike McGarvey of Eidos play a game of Tomb Raider III

VITAL STATISTICS

Market capitalisation £360m
Price 2200
Employees 590
CEO Charles H.D. Cornwall
Finance Director Jeremy Lewis
COO Mike McGarvey
Chairman Ian Livingstone
Executive Director Jeremy Heath-Smith



Source: Datastream

come the mutant child of a film studio and a record company. We have

a lot of individual developer relationships through equity stakes, outright ownership or contracts."

One key to the Eidos success is the even split of its senior team between bankers and technical wizards. Mr Cornwall and his finance director Jeremy Lewis are former bankers. Company chairman Ian Livingstone and executive director Jeremy Heath-Smith are the techies. The collaboration has been

manifestly fruitful, and they even appear to get along.

In a curious way, Eidos is itself becoming a venture capital house, identifying promising developers and helping them to get their products to market, often taking equity stakes. This is a unique business model, one that essentially puts Eidos in portfolio management.

The business is growing at 35 per cent annually with gross margins of 65 per cent on its products, which sell here for about £49 and in America

for around \$49. Eidos has also discovered that sequels to its hit games sell even better than the originals. They claim second place among independent publishers of games for the Playstation, behind Electronic Arts, in the key markets of the US, UK, Germany and France. Earlier this year, in a move to position itself alongside high-multiple Internet stocks, Eidos announced a deal with Easynet Group PLC, the Internet service provider, to give its customers a free connection and in-

teractive gaming with other enthusiasts over the Web. "The Web is going to be like the first words Adam said to Eve, 'Stand back - I don't know how big this thing is going to get,'" says Cornwall.

Perhaps, but Eidos has still to reach the dizzying multiples enjoyed by the American Internet stocks. Unlike many of them, it does make money. Investors hope Eidos enjoys the same success as the Garde of Eden appears to have been.

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THE CANARY

All that glisters: For an insight into the wacky world of Goldman Sachs we recommend a visit to its website. It transpires that new-age philosophy underpins the success of our wealthiest bankers. "We are excited by your interest in Goldman Sachs," gushes the site (www.gs.com/recruiting). It expounds the bank's philosophy of "Minds. Wide Open." Say what? This is the cheesiest mission statement since Kentucky Fried Chicken re-launched itself as a vendor of "chicken-dominant meals. For families". But Goldman likes so much it has registered the phrase as a trademark. The website explains that it represents "open-architecture thinking". Still want to work there?

All in half a day's work: Spare a thought for the poor London-based investment bankers eking out an existence on paltry six-figure salaries. The Canary has news of one Baltimore-based financier who was in the market for a million-dollar house in Antigua. No sooner had he put down his deposit of \$65,000 (£39,000) than he was told by a friend that neighbouring Barbuda was actually the place to be. He immediately pulled out of the sale. "You realise," warned the English solicitor officiating, "that you will lose your deposit." "What do I care?" drawled the banker. "It's only half a day's work."

Going green, or red-faced: After our revelations that Reuters, the financial news and information company, is planning to send more staff to Devon, the Canary was inundated with calls from employees. "There are serious implications for the quality of our product," one caller told us. And serious implications for a load of Londoners that don't want to move to the West Country! An existing staffer at Therton also phoned, but sounded confused. "I knew there were plans for us to move," she said. "But I thought we were all moving to Exeter." It must be all the cider they drink down there.

Paribas lock-in: London staff of the French investment bank Paribas are being offered golden handcuffs to stay. This follows the £22bn hostile bid from Banque Nationale de Paris for Société Générale and Paribas. Paribas and Société Générale had been discussing a gentle coupling of their own, but now the atmosphere is tense. "The uncertainty and the acrimony is worse than anything else," says a Paribas trader. "The handcuffs will have to be pretty bloody shiny to get people to stay. Headhunters are sniffing about at every level."

The Canary welcomes correspondence at canary@excite.co.uk

Miles Templeman

Managing Director, Beer Company, Whitbread Plc

THE PERSON who stands out most clearly from the pack is David Thompson, chairman of Wolverhampton and Dudley. He guided them through the acquisition of Marstons. He is a businessman who brought his viewpoint into the industry on various topics and stuck to it in the face of contrasting opinion. He has a bold and broad approach. I'd also like to nominate Bobby Neame from Shepherd Neame. He gradually built up a family business and developed interesting beers against all the odds, because he is not a big player. He got his beers into the marketplace and managed to sustain interest in them. Bobby is also a prominent spokesman for us. He and his vice-chairman Stuart Neame have done great work for us in the duty battle. Personality is something that matters very much in our business - which really is the hospitality business. The more outward-going people tend to succeed. Both nominees have positive personal qualities.

Anthony Fuller

Chairman, Fuller Smith and Turner Plc

MY NOMINEE is not a high-profile national player, but a regional stalwart - George Bateman of George Bateman and Sons. He managed to unite the family and the business in a time of massive crisis. A few years back, a part of the family was keen to sell, but George fought this and rallied his family. He made the right decision because the company went from strength to strength and they now own about 60 pubs. He has also managed to place their beer brands firmly on the brewing map. His success was due purely to his determination to succeed. He is a truly inspiring man. He had the long-term vision important to expanding a family business from one generation to the next - he's not just looking at instant profits like some of the pub breweries.

From Ebbe Dinesen

Chief Executive, Carlsberg-Tetley Brewing Ltd

I OUGHT to nominate Captain J C Jacobsen, who first produced Carlsberg in 1847 with the declared aim to "develop the art of making beer to the greatest degree of perfection", but I'd prefer to nominate someone making an active contribution to today's industry. One I particularly respect is Stuart Neame, of the Kent brewers Shepherd Neame. Like us all, Stuart objects to the unfairly high levels of taxation on beer. But, as a regional brewer whose consumer heartland is worst affected by floods of cheap imports, Stuart has made righting this situation a personal crusade, and he has fought a tenacious and high-profile legal battle to overturn the Government's policies. I respect his stand and the passion he shares with everyone else who is a success in this industry, to produce quality products without compromising on the brewing art.

Simon Loftus

Chairman, Adnams and Company Plc

THE BREWING industry is in turmoil partly because we have so few



Robert Neame (right), chairman of Shepherd Neame, with Jonathan and Stuart Neame

beer brand of its own and its tenants were unhappy. When he was in charge, Morlands was approached for takeover by one of those large predators, but Jasper fought them off and built up the brewery - they now have their famous brand, Old Speckled Hen. Thanks to him, it went from a sleepy family business into a decent-sized profitable company. As for people in the business at the moment, I much admire Anthony Fuller. He's flavour of the month because of his beers and his profitability. He managed to handle the families involved and he's kept them all interested and united. He's also a fighter for the brewers' business and chairman of several trade organisations. There was a traditional divide between family-owned companies and national breweries and he managed to present a united front to the Government for both sides of the industry.

David Goodwin

Chairman, Camra

WE AT Camra admire three breweries in England at the moment for three different reasons. The Neames at Shepherd Neame are doing great work promoting the harmonisation of beer duty across Europe - they are losing a lot of money through bootleggers who pop across to France for cheaper alcohol. Then there's Wolverhampton and Dudley in the charge of David Thompson. It has shown outstanding commitment to the community pub and oversized glasses so the customer always gets a full pint. And finally, Fullers, under the aegis of Anthony Fuller, which has been extremely successful in promoting real ales.

Robert Neame

Chairman, Shepherd Neame Ltd

THE MAN who most impresses me is Brian Stewart at Scottish and Newcastle. The moves Scottish has made with him at the helm have been superbly timed to position the company at the forefront of the business. The industry is changing to integrate other hospitality-based businesses, but Brian has ensured Scottish and Newcastle hasn't become absorbed in the leisure area to the cost of its brewing base. His clear vision helped rejuvenate our trade organisation, BLRA, and helped him to remain a spokesman for the industry while still being an architect of its reconstruction for the 21st century.

Michael Watts

Chief Executive, Morland Plc

THE INDUSTRY is made up from many diverse companies, but those who stand out for me are Brian Stewart of Scottish and Newcastle, who has turned a regional company into the largest national. Miles Templeman of Whitbread is also a man from the top end of the business who deserves praise for developing Stella Artois into one of the most popular beers in the country. Stuart Neame of Shepherd Neame has to be mentioned because he's fighting a cause for the industry - to streamline British beer duties with European ones.

INTERVIEWS BY SALLY CHATTERTON

MY FAVOURITE RESTAURANT

Green gourmet goes organic



DALE VINCE is managing director of The Renewable Energy Company, the UK's first and Europe's largest Green electricity supplier. For him, business is an extension of his environmental beliefs.

So his favourite restaurant is Woodruff's Organic Café in Stroud, Gloucestershire, which claims to be the country's first 100 per cent organic eatery. "I like organic stuff but I'm also a bit of a fussy eater and they can cater for me."

"I'm a vegan and I recently

gave up eating wheat after not eating any while I was in Kyoto for the climate conference. I'm feeling much better for it."

Whether for a mid-morning snack of boney and porridge, made with organic oats and soya milk, or lunch of a Thai curry or Italian fennel bake, he says he doesn't have to pay more than £5 at Woodruff's but you certainly get full up."

The people who run the café are "enthusiastic about what they do and the cooking is fantastic".

Vince, 37, is not keen on doing business in London, though having recently signed a deal with Thames Water, he finds himself having to visit the capital about twice a month.

He prefers conducting business in Stroud, where he is based, and says he would have no hesitation about taking business associates for lunch at Woodruff's. But he adds: "It's not as pleasant as doing the job. I prefer to get down to the issues. You can do too much wine and dining."

Woodruff's, 24 High Street, Stroud, Glos (01453 762250)

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BOOK OF THE WEEK

Family fortune's rise and fall

Benetton. The Family, the Business and the Brand
by Jonathan Maitre (Little Brown, £17.99)

BENETTON the book is a bit like Benetton the brand. It starts with colour, freshness, and is full of interest. It grows into something comprehensive, international, vibrant, stimulating and challenging. It finishes as something slightly confused, losing authority and leaving lots of questions unanswered.

What really happened to sales volumes, year on year, and country by country, as the brand lost its way, and allowed Gap and others to take the high ground of added value, mass market fashion? To judge from the book there was little change in the inexorable growth of business on a global scale. The closing of stores and the bankruptcy of franchisees is presented as a temporary adjustment. It is justified, in a phrase that is unfortunate in the light of recent developments, as "cleaning the system".

Once Gap arrived on the scene the book is muted on the company's response. The book is very good on the family origins, and the evolution and development of the brand. The story of Leono - the father who bravely left for Albania to secure the family's future - to return home broken in health with malaria, and unable to provide as he would have wished for his family, is touchingly told.

Luciano Benetton, the oldest of the four children, took up the mantle, at the age of 10, of the family's chief breadwinner. His younger sister, Giuliana, even then extremely talented in clothing design and make-up, made nearly all the clothes for the family. Giuliana left school early, worked in a clothing store, and began to sell the colourful and original sweaters that Giuliana had produced in her spare time. The sales grew and grew, work was subcontracted, and stores selling their goods exclusively were eventually opened. The Benetton franchise system was unusual, but in the early

and major growth stages at least, highly effective.

The book also deals well with the development of Edizione, the totally family-owned holding company that diversified into other areas, and became a big player in Italian business. In addition, some of the darker sides of business development are handled well, including the sometimes breathtaking shenanigans that went on in Benetton Formula One motor racing (particularly those involving Michael Schumacher).

Overall, *Benetton* is a book that is both engaging and illuminating. For full satisfaction, it is perhaps best to approach it as an excellent holiday read, with business side benefits, rather than a must-read piece of business education.

TIM DRAKE

Tim Drake co-founded Cobra Sports in 1979, and sold it in 1992, when it was turning over £17m. He is now a retail strategy consultant and an author.

Joshua 1.50

Everyone out of step in the housing market

THERE MAY not seem to be much of an immediate connection, but the news that the Bradford & Bingley is being forced reluctantly to de-mutualise seems a good moment to revisit the strange and so far unexplained mystery of the divergent house price indices. For many years there have been two prominent indices that track changes in house prices in England & Wales.

Both are prepared by prominent mortgage lenders - one by the Halifax, the other by the Nationwide Building Society. For many years, it was difficult to find much daylight between the results. Suddenly, about two to three years ago, something strange occurred. The two indices began to march at a quite different pace. For most of the past two years, house prices as recorded by the Nationwide have been growing substantially faster than those recorded by the Halifax.

In the third quarter of 1997, the Nationwide index recorded that prices were 12.5 per cent higher

than they had been 12 months previously. According to the Halifax, however, the annual rate of increase was barely half that amount, 6.6 per cent. For three quarters in a row the rate of increase shown by the first index was more than double that shown by the second.

Although the gap has narrowed a little more recently, the divergent readings of the Halifax and Nationwide indices continues. Confused? You are not the only one. The divergence between the two indices is noteworthy because the two series had so closely tracked each other before. The fact that they are now marching in different directions casts an obvious doubt over their reliability as an indicator of what is happening to prices and economic activity in this country.

The difference is important, not just to impatient homeowners, but to economic policymakers as well. House price inflation is one of the key indicators the Bank of England monitors in setting interest rates.

Having been embarrassed a year ago into a misguided interest rate change by rogue readings from the statistics on average earnings, the Bank's monetary policy committee has been concerned to try to find out what has gone wrong with the house price indices on which they were once happy to rely.

As I discovered last week, when I dropped in on a Bank-sponsored seminar on this issue, the house price issue has prompted a feverish bout of analysis and soul-searching by the country's statistical profession. The two rival indices have been taken apart and hacked repeatedly, both internally and by independent experts, to try to eliminate all the most obvious reasons why they might suddenly have started to diverge. We now have it on the best statistical authority that many of the explanations simply don't hold water.

For example, one popular view has been that the difference simply reflects the fact that the



JONATHAN
DAVIS

It's surprising that the statisticians are failing to use the one thing that could help unravel the house price mystery, which is common sense

Nationwide typically lends money on more properties in the richer South, whereas the Halifax is more heavily concentrated in the North and Midlands. The statistical analysis is quite conclusive, however; that this is not the cause of the divergence in the price indices. (Common sense would suggest that if this were the cause, it would have shown up before the 1997 hiatus.) Both indices, it should be said, were constructed with the advice of outside experts and are based on sufficiently large samples to produce statistically significant results.

The conclusion of the various experts at the seminar was that the divergence in the house price indices remains, officially, a mystery. So concerned has the Bank itself become that it has started its own house-price index, based on data held at the Land Registry. The advantage of this data is that it is based on actual prices paid for properties, including those bought with cash. The

Halifax and Nationwide indices by contrast are based on the prices borrowers have agreed to pay at the mortgage application stage.

By definition, the data in their two indices excludes the 25 per cent or so of properties that are bought without a mortgage each year. The drawback of the Bank index is that the Land Registry data does not include the detailed breakdown of transactions by type and size of house that the two building society samples provide. So it provides very few meaningful explanations of how and why house prices are changing. For the record, however, the Land Registry data suggests that house prices are, in fact, rising at a rate which is about halfway between that recorded by the Halifax and the Nationwide.

The one surprise to me in this great debate is that all the statisticians are failing to use the one fact that might help them to unravel the mystery, which is common sense. It is surely more than

coincidence that the divergence arises during the period when Halifax was preparing to demutualise and Nationwide was stepping up its campaign to remain the leading mutually owned building society.

We know that the Halifax's share of the mortgage market has fallen sharply since its flotation, while that of the Nationwide has increased. The gap between the two lenders' mortgage rates has suddenly become very wide. The two lenders are pursuing very different lending strategies. At the same time, the market has been experiencing an unprecedented degree of competition, with the widespread use of cashbacks, discounted mortgages, flexible loans and all the rest of it.

In other words, we have been witnessing unique and unprecedented behavioural changes on both sides of the lending equation. The moral is: don't put too much reliance on any indicator of prices until the war between mutuals and demutualisers has run its course.

Should you invest in... pharmaceutical companies?

BY KEIRON ROOT

THE PHARMACEUTICALS sector has been a source of strong growth, despite the potentially high-risk nature of a business heavily dependent on research and development of new products, and patent protection. The more mature business of chemicals manufacture has also been largely out of favour.

Glenn Meyer of Pavilion Asset Management says: "The two sectors seem to act in opposition. Pharmaceuticals are generally growth stocks and chemical companies tend to be highly cyclical. Pharmaceuticals have a much clearer and longer flow of earnings, and the chemical sector moves in line with the world economy and is much more volatile."

Jeremy Batstone of NatWest Stockbrokers has a different focus. "Pharmaceuticals have been very volatile and the sector has tended to lag the market," he says. "People are looking more for value as the economy has improved, away from more defensive growth areas like pharmaceuticals."

Mark Mathias, head of investment funds at Rea Brothers Investment Management, agrees the sector's long-term growth potential is undisputed. Mathias, whose firm runs two specialist pharmaceutical funds, says: "There is the trend to ageing populations in the OECD countries, with the highest proportion of lifetime healthcare expenditure coming in the last two years of life, underpinned by the significant increase in healthcare research

expenditure. At the same time, the OECD governments are trying to rein in the cost of government-subsidised healthcare and the way you do that is to spend more on drugs to keep people out of hospital."

North America's political debate about state-funded medical programmes has added to the uncertainty, says Nigel Thomas, manager of ABN Amro's UK Growth Fund.

"Proposed legislation in Medicare reform will limit spending on outpatient drug costs for elderly people who account for over 30 per cent of US outpatient drug spending and this will affect pharmaceutical companies - the PT suggests it would impact earnings by between 10 and 15 per cent."

Thomas says the plans will probably not come to fruition but the debate is affecting share prices. "It is a political hot potato but given the Republican position in Congress, we are not so sure it will be enacted."

Size is also going to be a key element in future corporate earnings. "When it comes down to it, healthcare is not an optional expenditure and the amounts spent on it are going to rise," adds Mathias.

"There is very good long-term earnings visibility in the pharmaceutical sector and mergers of large companies. You can sell the same drugs into different markets and it helps keep control in multinational companies."

By contrast, the bulk of investor interest in the drugs

Batstone says: "There is still a lot of scope for mergers and acquisitions in the pharmaceutical sector. Critical mass is the key force driving consolidation because of the large spend on R&D. The quicker you can develop a new drug from scratch, the longer you will have the benefit of its patent protection, but without the scale you haven't got the size or funds for research."

Every major player is in the frame. "SmithKline Beecham is mentioned on a fairly regular basis but Glaxo Wellcome is also rumoured to be looking at an overseas tie-up," he adds.

Glenn Meyer says: "The UK chemical sector has underperformed the market, but overseas firms seem to value UK chemical companies more highly than the market does."

Stock selection is the key: "Concentrate on chemical sector stocks which focus on profitable areas, such as BTP, which constantly refreshes its portfolio," he says. "Avoid larger companies, which tend to underperform the market."

There is scope for the active share trader. Meyer adds: "ICI has been a relatively poor performer for a long time, but with short periods of outperformance, so timing is everything. Look at manufacturers of industrial chemicals. The problem here is that you very quickly reach overcapacity and have a fairly low return on capital."

By contrast, the bulk of investor interest in the drugs

sector is focused on the largest stocks. Nigel Thomas says:

"There aren't that many pure pharmaceutical companies below £1bn in size. Shire Pharmaceuticals and Medeva, with Galen in Ireland, are the only mid-sized ones and once below a certain size they are largely bio-techns, of which we like Celltech and Phytopharm."

Jeremy Batstone adds: "There are a lot of stocks in the sector relatively cheap, with the possible exception of AstraZeneca. Glaxo Wellcome still looks good value at around £19. We would suggest it could get up to maybe £21.50 or £22 in the short to medium term."

Another key player in the sector is SmithKline Beecham, where investors were holding off until the US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) ruled on Avandia, its new diabetes treatment. last week. Batstone adds:

"The ruling was positive and SmithKline could be looking at sales of \$1.5bn to \$2bn."

NO PAIN, NO GAIN: OUR MAN'S PORTFOLIO

Four go up and only one down



DEREK
PAIN

Gowrings, the Burger King fast food restaurants to car dealing group, is the unchanged share, losing a modest gain to settle at 103.5p.

Paramount, the pub chain, emerges as the early star of the

portfolio. Recommended at 15p, the shares moved quickly to 22.5p. They are now 21p. In stock market terms Paramount is regarded as an "illiquid" share, so turnover is not published. But with the market short of stock, market makers were caught on the hop.

Montana, the London restaurant chain, has moved from 182.5p to 192.5p. It did for a time top 200p. It is my one Ofex constituent. The lightly regulated fringe market can be high risk. But it can also produce some real gems.

My blue chip stocks have performed well, with speculation about various forms of corporate action making a significant contribution.

Safeway has not surprised

PAIN'S PORTFOLIO

	Price tipped	Latest price
Allied Domecq	482.5p	521.0p
Gowrings	103.5p	103.5p
Montana	182.5p	197.5p
Paramount	15.0p	21.0p
Regal Hotel	29.5p	26.5p
Safeway	248.0p	272.5p

ingly, been caught up in the rumours swirling around the retail sector and has surged from 248p to 272.5p. Wal-Mart, the US giant retailer, and Royal Ahold, the Dutch supermarket chain, are regarded as the most likely predators.

Allied Domecq, interim figures tomorrow, is once again

feeling the pressure of speculation

about a demerger, or perhaps,

the much-needed spirits

link with another international player. From a 482.5p tip price the shares have frothed to 521p, despite what is expected to be

a weak profits display.

Although it is rarely wrong to take a profit I can see no urgent need to ditch Safeway or Allied. Even if the speculative excitement fades and corporate action fails to materialise there is always another day. Both groups have to pull their corporate socks up or they will be taken out of their misery.

The two shares continue to offer the comfort of accumulating dividend yields in these low interest rate days. Safeway is on 5 per cent and Allied 4.8 per cent.



A technician at work for Glaxo Wellcome, one of the biggest stocks in the pharmaceuticals sector

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Spread your bets across the market

By CLAIRE BURSTON

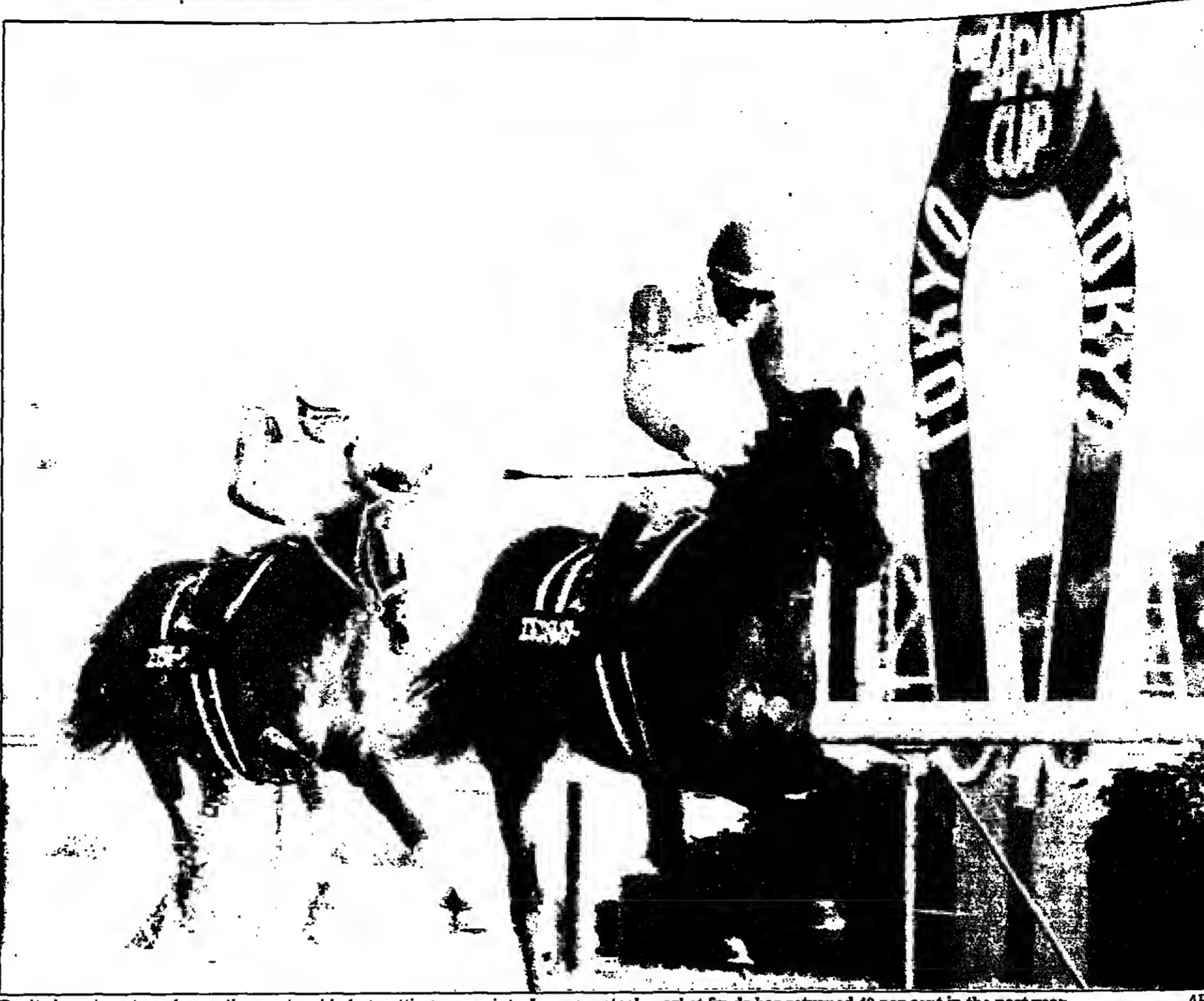
STOCK markets climb ever skyward, breaking new highs week after week, savers who are not interested in equities must be feeling pretty sick.

But successful investing is not about sticking some money in a few companies' shares, standing back and watching it grow. In fact, unless you have an excellent stockbroker, now the inside track on a company or are prepared to devote a considerable amount of time and effort into monitoring your investments, putting money directly into the stock market could leave you with a sour taste in your mouth and a considerably smaller nest-egg.

The trick is - as the investment industry's mantra goes - not to keep all your eggs in one basket. Diversification is the name of the game. And for most people, unless you have hundreds of thousands pounds to invest, the best route to stock market success is likely to be through a collective investment scheme such as a unit trust or investment trust.

What nearly all of those in this position are looking for is to build a balanced investment portfolio. The creation of any investment portfolio begins with two fundamental questions - what objectives are you trying to achieve with this capital, and what level of risk are you willing to take in planning a suitable investment strategy?

Overwhelmingly, the two primary objectives will be to generate income and to achieve capital growth, with the balance between the two determined by the circumstances of the individual concerned. Much of the choice between the two will depend on personal goals. You may wish to build more capital for retirement, to boost current income, or perhaps to save for a specific pur-



Equity investment can be a rollercoaster ride but putting money into Japanese stock market funds has returned 40 per cent in the past year

America or the Asian countries. Economic and market cycles have always produced ups and downs in equity values and almost certainly always will. The table below illustrates this point and shows which unit trust sectors have been the best and worst performers over the past three years.

The average Japanese fund has been the best performing over the past year, returning 40 per cent, but over three years it has lost almost 18 per cent, making it the 21st worst performing sector out of 25.

Most investors' portfolios are heavily weighted towards the UK.

But in the past few years this strategy may not have produced the best returns. Over the past year to mid-April an investor who put a third of their savings into each of the average performing unit trusts in the Europe, the UK and US would have achieved a return of 7.25 per cent.

The average UK growth unit trust would have grown just 0.99 per cent. If the money was split four ways and invested in Japan, too, the return would be even higher at 12.52 per cent. Over three years, the three-way split achieved 59.32 per cent while the average UK fund grew

by 53.86 per cent and over five years the return from the three-way split was 107.99 per cent, the UK average fund growing 88.67 per cent.

So where do you start? Peter Jeffreys, managing director at leading fund analysts Standard & Poor's Fund Research, says: "The key to a good fund is one which is managed by someone who has developed a sound and disciplined investment process and sticks to it. The process must be applied consistently. A good fund manager will also apply risk controls so the fund will not deviate too much from a benchmark. It is important to give investors as close to

the market return as possible."

Choice is clearly critical. But in an already crowded financial marketplace, making the right choices can be difficult. There are more than 2,000 unit trusts on offer. The choice of products is changing and expanding all the time, equity markets rise and fall, and interest rates fluctuate. Regular monitoring is vital. Your objectives and circumstances may also change.

In principle, creating and managing the right investment portfolio is straightforward: objectives and risks; balance and diversification; selection, good advice, monitoring

and management. In practice, it is complicated hugely by the confusion of choice and the vagaries of change.

Today we start a regular column which should help you not only to pick funds from the vast array on offer, but also enable you to monitor your portfolio once those investments have been made.

With the help of Standard & Poor's Fund Research I will look at sectors, regions and themes, picking out the funds to give the savvy investor some useful ideas as both a starting point and to aid your portfolio development.

HOW MANAGED FUNDS HAVE FADED

	1 year %	2 year %	3 Year %
Japan	40.1	16.95	-17.77
Far East Including Japan	19.36	-9.53	-19.96
North America	17.53	65.66	71.99
UK Gilt	11.88	28.35	39.49
International Equity Growth	10.64	38.41	42.63
Far East Excluding Japan	9.63	-23.92	-28.48
International Equity & Bond	9.5	32.47	37.54
UK Fixed Interest	8.88	27.06	42.2
UK Equity & Bond	8.75	47.48	68.82
International Fixed Interest	8.66	15.01	11.88
Managed Fund	7.88	35.38	47.55
UK Growth & Income	7.66	45.1	69.01
International Equity Income	7.66	43.94	54.28
UK Equity Growth	6.49	41.08	63.72
UK Equity & Bond Income	6.39	36.41	56.37
UK Equity Income	5.62	42.52	66.5
Fund of Funds	5.41	28.96	35.75
Money Market	4.74	10.09	15.13
Property	4.02	20.7	40.29
Europe	3.28	48.47	66.45
Investment Trust Units	0.65	25.54	37.98
UK Smaller Companies	-2.76	14.43	31.03
Index Bear	-4.07	-29.22	-38.65
Commodity & Energy	-10.3	-32.7	-41.09
Emerging Markets	-12.8	-20.3	-16.83

Source: Standard & Poor's Micropal to March 1999

MY BIGGEST MISTAKE: JEFF STANTON

Quick solutions prove costly

MY BIGGEST mistake was to act too quickly without consulting my staff. I would put that mistake down to the impetuosity of youth: it occurred when I was 26 and had just taken a role as a financial manager. When I got there, I was amazed. It had a Dickensian approach: I had inherited a financial department of about 40 people, split into 15 individual sections in about 10 offices. There were lots of partitions.

I had been there for about a month and thought it was ridiculous. The first thing was to make a smaller number of larger sections, so I talked to the office manager and we decided to actually break down the barriers physically. We didn't tell anyone, but we came in on a weekend and did it. When everyone came in on Monday, the partitions were down and the desks - which had been facing the front like a schoolroom - were rearranged.

My thinking was: this is good

and everybody will be very pleased. It was funny on the Sunday, but not on the Monday. I had a deposition from the staff, who were very upset. They said they needed their offices for privacy. They also said that if they faced each other, germs would spread more quickly, and this would cause serious problems. I had to decide whether to say: "This is a load of rubbish", or whether to back-pedal a bit and say, "I should



have consulted you". It was a company that had been doing things a particular way for a long time.

In the end, everybody accepted it and it was a stupid situation, but nobody had the wherewithal to do anything about it because they felt too many people would be upset. My job, after the change, was to use some charm and say, "I've done it now: let's see how this proves to be an expensive mistake."

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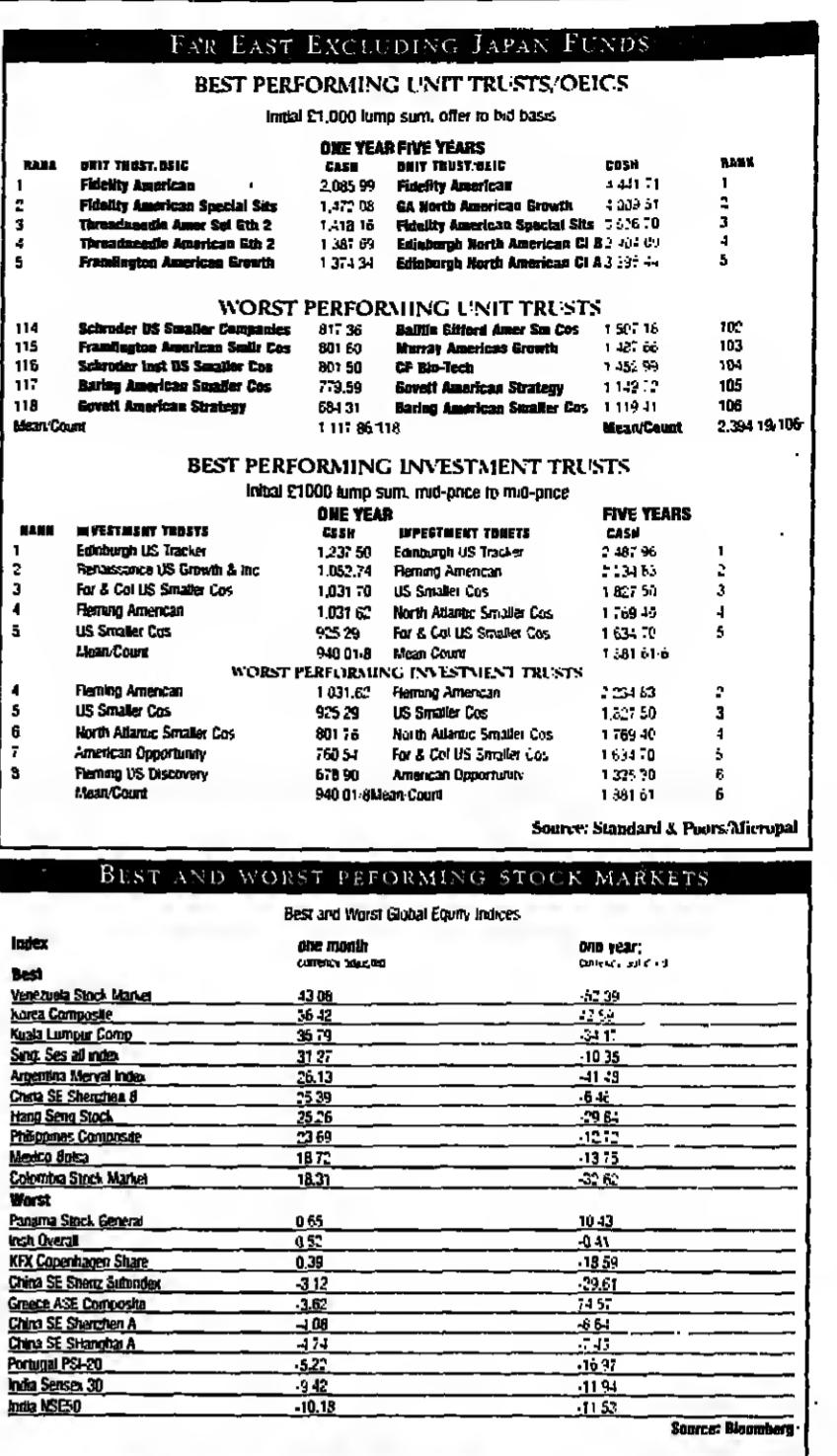
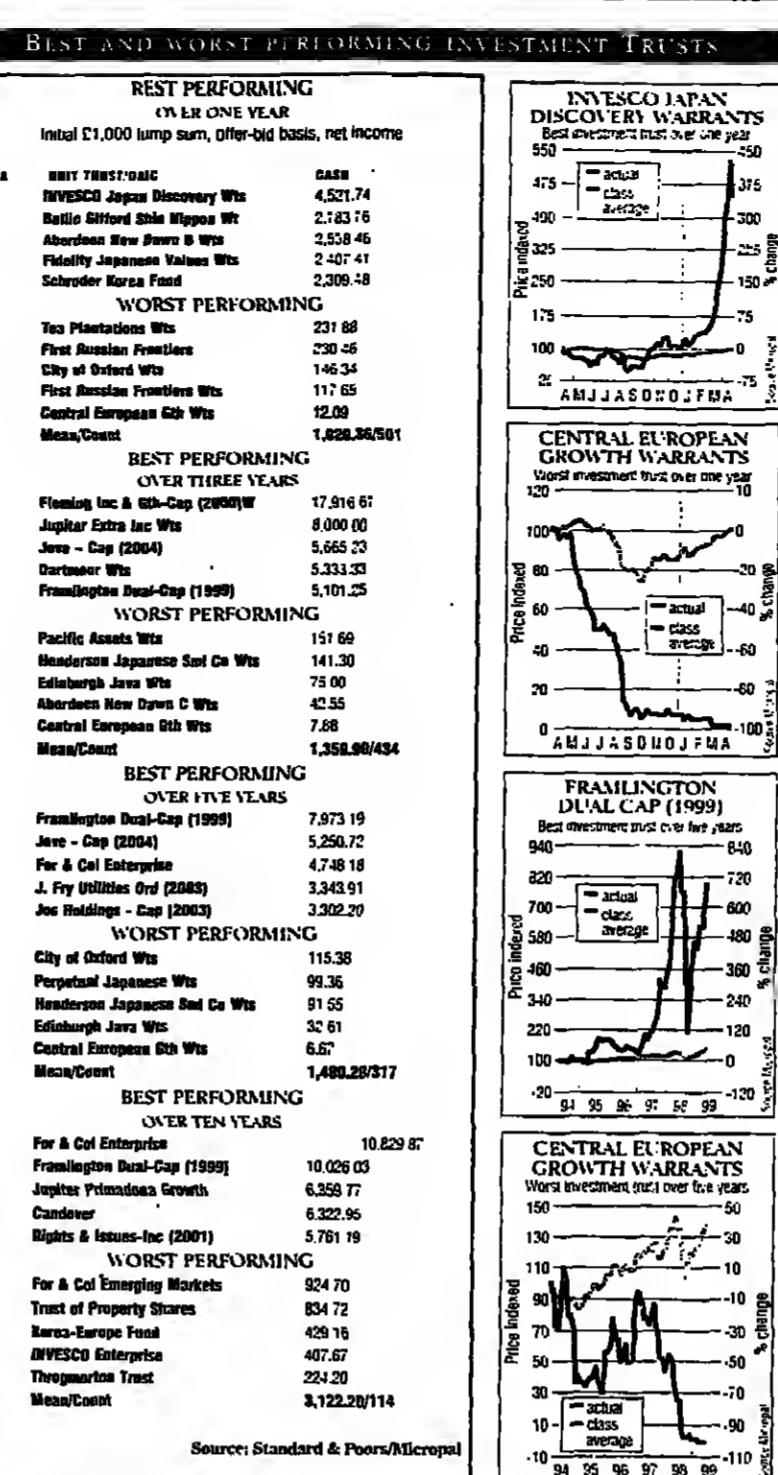
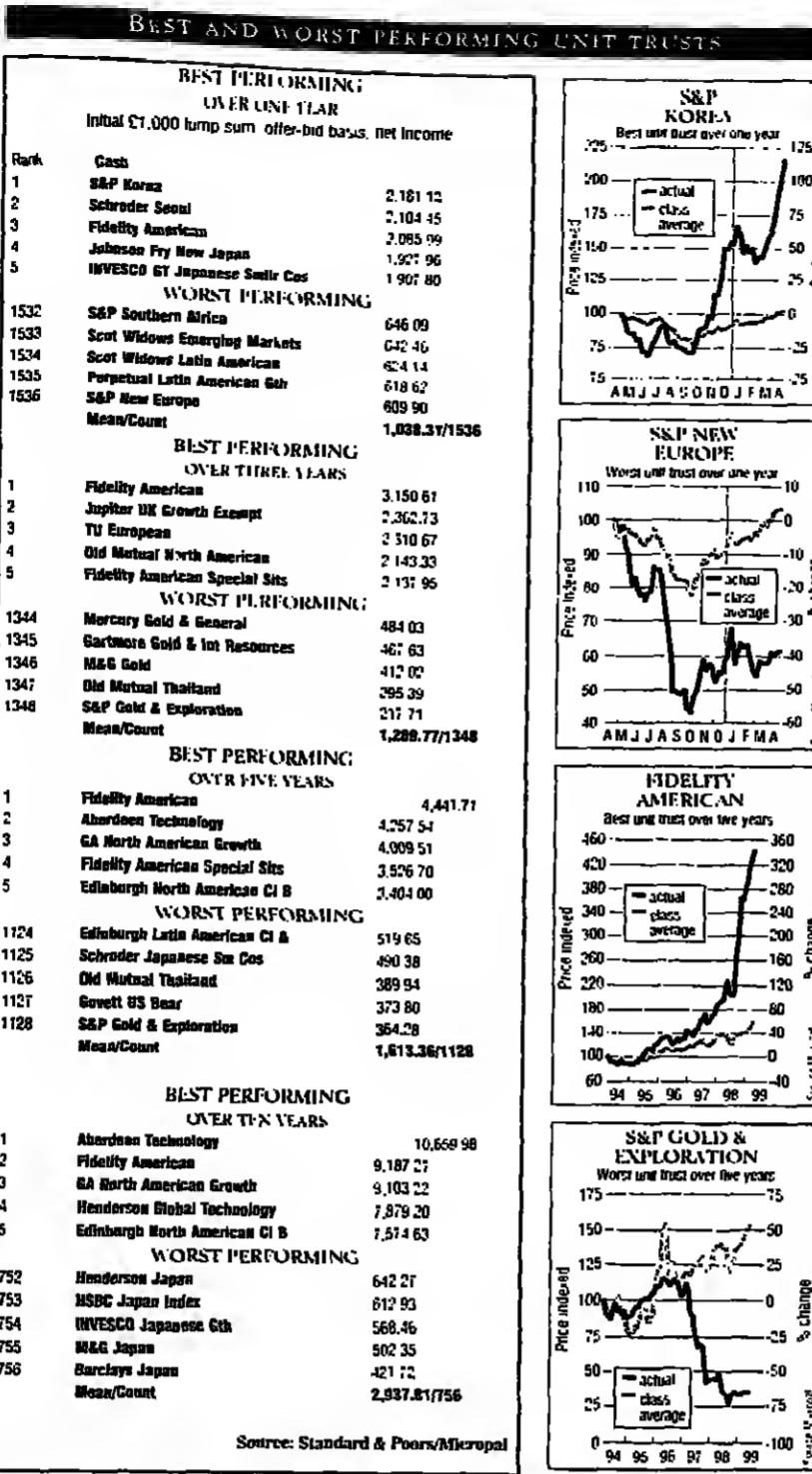
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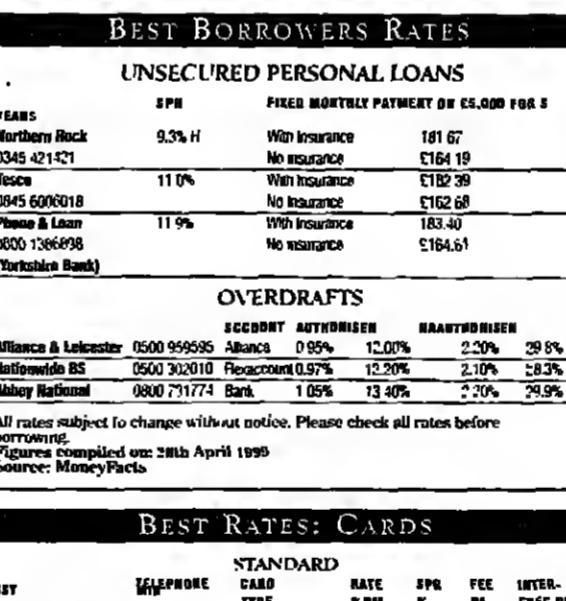
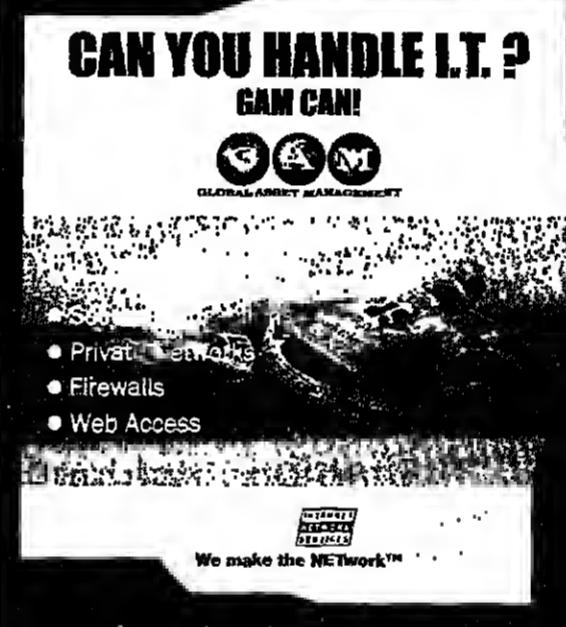


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Name	Actual	Class	Average
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Albany Inv Fund	220.5		
Alizyme	44		
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Amec	271.5		
Anglo & Overseas	817		
Anglo Amer Pltl	12.44		
Aromascan	18.25		
Artisan (UK)	7		
Aust Opp Inv Tr	91.5		
Baldwins Ind Srv	184.5		
Barclays	1993		
Barlows	67.5		
Barratt Dev	376.5		
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Beriford	263		
BGI End Edl	104.5		
Bioglan Pharma	335.5		
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Brent Int'l	121.5		
Brit Sky Broadca	561.5		
Britannia Group	47.5		
Brown & Jackson	122.5		
Bryant Group	147		
Cala	184.5		
Calluna	3		
Cambridge WA-NV	292.5		
Cambridge Water	395		
Cap Radio	835		
Coltech	467.5		
Character Group	457		
Charles Stanley	620		
Chime Communications	77.5		
Church & Co	440		
Cladet Hicks	129.5		
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ME AND MY PARTNER

ERIC WALTERS AND JON MOULTON

Jon Moulton hired Eric Walters at Schroder Ventures in 1987. Ten years later, he founded private equity firm Alchemy Partners and invited Walters to join him. Last year, Alchemy came second only to 3i in the buyout league tables



Eric Walters (left) and Jon Moulton of Alchemy: 'We have got to a stage where we don't have a great deal to prove - we work because we enjoy it'

Philip Meech

JON MOULTON: The first contact I had with Eric was through Allen Sheppard, chief executive of Grand Metropolitan. GM wanted Eric to be part of the management in the States, and Eric didn't want to go. I heard he would make a good hire, and he joined me at Schroder Ventures, which I was running.

I had set it up in spring 1985 after working for Citycorp in New York. I was advising in leveraged buyouts in 1980, and came back a year later.

Eric joined Schroder with the intention of being on the industrial and commercial side of the business. He was one of two people looking after things and sorting problems, rather than deal execution. To some extent, he has remained in that mode. He is loved by managers, sometimes to excess. It's very difficult to imagine Eric as a duplicitous conspirator. He expects me to look after the investors.

With Eric what you see is what you get: you know exactly where you are with him. He's bright and extremely decisive and he gets 90 per cent of decisions right. He's very organised, very tidy, his office desk is clean and he doesn't leave a meeting with open issues. His personal life is the same way. He's married to a Swiss lady, and that seems appropriate.

Schroder wanted their ball back in 1993. They'd given too much independence to the

size. We haven't got much more in the way of objectives: we have no firm strategic steps in mind. I'm 48 and he is 54: we have got to a stage where we don't have a great deal to prove. We work because we enjoy it.

If Eric and I have a disagreement, it can last as long as 15 seconds. The great thing is that he doesn't dig his heels in. He says, yes, I'm wrong - and that's it. It's gone.

We do have one terrible defect - we like to go to bed early. So when we go to the theatre, we go to matinees, because we both need to sleep.

ERIC WALTERS: I was working for Grand Metropolitan and Allen Sheppard started talking about how he enjoyed working with Jon Moulton. I had never met him. I didn't want to go to America for family reasons. I got a pay-off, and a smart head-hunter rang me and put me in the direction of Schroder Ventures. I found Jon incisive and decisive, a kindred spirit.

He would never settle in a place such as Schroder. There was a spat, and that particular spat had its human dramas, but there was never any drama between me and Jon. I was absolutely of his camp. If he had founded Alchemy at that point, I would have joined him, and I told him that. He chose to join Apax. He underplayed himself. He thought if he set up on his own, it would take a long time to see money from institutions. He was wrong: he didn't understand his own worth. He just couldn't believe it could be done so quickly.

I stayed with Schroder Ventures but I was bored out of my brain because of the absence of Jon and the scale of it. It's a big operation. There were lots of meetings and committees. Jon said to me: "Stop fooling round. Come and join me." He had just started Alchemy. My daughter said: "You love working with Jon and you always talk about him. Why don't you go and join him?" I thought: "You're right."

Venture capital is like some sort of heaven to me. I go home most days and say: "Guess what happened to me?" I stayed with Schroder Ventures but I was bored out of my brain because of the absence of Jon and the scale of it. It's a big operation. There were lots of meetings and committees. Jon said to me: "Stop fooling round. Come and join me." He had just started Alchemy. My daughter said: "You love working with Jon and you always talk about him. Why don't you go and join him?" I thought: "You're right."

Venture capital to me, is like some sort of heaven. I go home most days and say: "Guess what happened to me?" It's a complete buzz non-stop. Being at Alchemy is like the early days at Schroder Ventures, and people say to me: "You're reinvigorated." It's a combination of working with Jon and the small scale in terms of bodies. It's to do with the hunter-gatherer syndrome, being in groups of 5 to 15. We genuinely don't have clogged arteries.

We focus on difficult deals. That's easy to say and a lot of people talk about it, but you can't just wake up one morning and say: "We'll do loss-making transactions." For us, it's pretty cool. It's not by chance. We have a tremendous mix of different backgrounds, and that's vital. I've learnt a tremendous amount and I'm still learning. I'm Steady Eddy: I react evenly. I'm not casual, but I take everything calmly. Jon is more mercurial. It's a good combination, but our views tend to come into line.

Jon was really focused in creating something, but he has loosened up and he'll take a long weekend in France, and go skiing. I am not a financial guy - I learnt on the job - but working with Jon has opened a window on a world I had never dreamt of.

INTERVIEWS BY
RACHELLE THACKRAY



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Shocking, isn't it? But it actually makes very good business sense. The fact is we all like a good moan now and again. And customers are no exception. Unfortunately they tend to be a little reticent, so before you realise there's a problem they've walked away. The solution can be as simple as a

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'The silly sentiment that makes television viewers feel that they knew Jill Dando is not so different from the corrupted obsession that ended in blame and hate and murder'

Death by television



BY DEBORAH ORR

I heard the news that Jill Dando had been a victim of violent crime on the lunchtime bulletin from *Newsroom Southeast*. There were a couple of brief sentences, saying that she had been stabbed outside her home in west London, and taken to hospital in an ambulance. My initial assumption was that this must have been a mugging, or perhaps what has come to be known as a care-in-the-community incident. Certainly, it must have been a random act of senseless violence", not a common occurrence but not so rare that the phrase doesn't trip off the tongue. At this stage it was fervently to be hoped that this unlucky woman would make a full recovery.

But at the end of the programme, a newsflash came up, and Jennie Bond announced that Dando, the "ordinary but extraordinary" girl-next-door, was dead. Then, with the kind of tragic flourish that is a consequence of the weird fact-meets-fiction hyperworld of daytime television, *Neighbours* came on.

I went out to meet a friend who freelances for the *Daily Mail*. On the car radio as I made the journey, Jack Straw was making a statement to the House of Commons regretting the loss of Jill Dando. Tony Blair had already issued a statement. This also seemed strange for although this death was a tragedy, it was not connected with the affairs of government. Anyway, the fact that this same Tony Blair had been arguing for days that the Jill Daniels were legitimate targets in bombing attacks was a little jarring.

By the time I met my friend from the *Mail*, she'd already made the *Crimestitch* connection. We both felt sure that the murderer had been either a celebrity stalker or some other kind of loony who had been imprisoned due to the programme. Not random violence, then, but planned violence. Worse, more sin-

ister, sicker. When I got home I learned that she may not have been stabbed, she may instead have been shot. By this time flags were at half mast, tributes were pouring in – not least one from the Queen – books of condolence had been opened, and flowers were piling up. And by this time as well, the first of many comparisons was being made with the death of Princess Diana, or with the murder of John Lennon. Tributes were arriving at the BBC website at the rate of one every two seconds.

A picture of a screen was flashed up on another screen, displaying the first of the messages. At the top was one from a woman who said she thought she had been desensitised to violence – until now. This seemed to me like a tribute no one would like to receive. Is the fact that this tribute has come from someone who has remained unmoved by war in Europe, nail bombs on ethnic communities in Britain, young lives blasted away in distant schoolrooms, supposed to enhance its value? Or does the fact that the murder of a television presenter is found to be more moving than any other death, instead demean us all?

And another picture was emerging on our television screens, a picture that was new to me. I didn't watch *Holiday*, or *Crimestitch* or *Songs of Praise*. I hadn't seen the first episode of *Antiques Inspectors*. I don't read *OK!* or *Hello!* or *Radio Times*. I'd never read an interview with Dando or an item of celebrity gossip about her. I'd never felt her warmth ooze into my living room, or made a personal connection with her through the machine in the corner. All of the details about her life and work that were flooding into my head were new.

The man for whom Jill Dando really was the girl-next-door had been on television, explaining how he had found her, unconscious and covered in blood, on their shared doormat. Her brother, Nigel Dando, also a journalist, came on to say how shattered he was by her loss. Many other newscasters and television presenters, who were her friends as well as

her colleagues, appeared on television to speak about their own sense of loss.

And they were united in all that they said. Jill Dando had been open, friendly, compassionate, professional, modest, without snobbery, caring, loving, close to her family, a good friend, a good colleague, a good neighbour. She had been beautiful, unaffected, intelligent, warm, thoughtful, sensitive, happy, positive, optimistic, charming, unassuming.

She had been preparing for her marriage, looking forward to starting a family. She had been a committed Christian, an enthusiastic and diligent charity worker, a loving daughter and sister. She had felt herself to live life on borrowed time for, as a child, she had had a hole in the heart operation. She had been stated as one of the presenters of the BBC's millennium coverage, while her first job, as a reporter on the *Weston Mercury*, had been secured after she wrote a 500-word essay on the year 2000. Of course, she has not lived to usher it in.

All of this makes her murder seem all the more poignant, even though we know that anyone's murder, whatever their flaws, is equally terrible. And while few people could have watched all of the tributes on television without weeping, my own tears made me feel ashamed.

What could these sentimental tears mean, in comparison to those of Jill Dando's fiance, Mr Alan Farthing? He has lost his love, his future, the children he may have had. He has lost her real presence in his life. Her physical warmth, palpable beside him until yesterday, no longer exists.

How do my tears match up to those of Mr Jack Dando, her father, who held her in his arms as a baby, who brought her up so well, who has lost his wife and now has lost his child? How will he live without her? Is our loss at all comparable to his loss?

How can all these people who feel that they know Jill Dando know her like her brother does, miss her like he does? How many times, as his life goes on without her, will he regret that there are joys

and sadnesses he can no longer share with her?

And anyway is the grief of fathers, brothers, friends, greater because the loved one they have lost is "a woman who had everything"? For there is something disquieting in this too, as there was in the public reaction to the death of Princess Diana. Are nice, decent people this rare, that it is a national, not a personal tragedy, when one is lost?

Why do we feel the need to display our sadness so openly, with such presumption? We should all know that our own feelings of sadness are of a different, lesser order to those of the people who really did know her. We do not "know how they feel". We only imagine what we do. To claim a personal sense of loss, when we do not know this person at all, is surely self-indulgent.

Both the BBC and ITV broadcast tribute programmes after their early-evening news programmes, as much because this was the loss of someone many of them had known personally as because of the inherent news value of what, at this time, remained the kind of death that could befall any one of us.

But it was during the ITN tribute, led by Trevor McDonald, that the results of the post-mortem became public knowledge. Jill Dando had been shot in the head. Immediately, one's thoughts turned to the idea of a hitman, a contract killer. The prospect that Jill Dando's life was taken in exchange for money, as a consequence of her television appearances, is truly revolting. The police remain non-committal about connections to *Crimestitch*, but have said that because of that connection they look on the investigation of Jill Dando's murder as "one of their own".

This, again, I find to be very far from a fitting tribute. Late last night, there were news pictures broadcast of Jill Dando's Fulham home, cordoned off by the police with a shroud of white tarpaulin. News reports assured us that they were searching every inch of the crime scene for forensic evidence.

This reminded me of the death of another person who was said to be a decent, loving human being with a bright future ahead of him. But when Stephen Lawrence lay dying, no police officer even checked to see if the pool of blood he was lying in was coming from him. There was no tarpaulin shroud for him. The wife of an off-duty police officer cradled Stephen Lawrence in her arms while they waited for an ambulance, and whispered to him "you are loved, you are loved".

This wise, compassionate woman spoke the truth more accurately than she could have known. It is because Stephen Lawrence was loved so much that we have heard of him at all. But we have heard of Jill Dando because she had a successful career in television. And while we may now feel like yelling that we loved her, that doesn't make it true.

Whether it was a stalker who killed Jill Dando, or a contract killer, the likelihood is that she died as a direct consequence of her fame. The silly sentiment that makes television viewers feel that they knew her is not so different from the corrupted obsession that ended in blame and hate and murder.

The power we invest in celebrity, the significance we imbue it with, and the uniqueness we project on to those in the public eye, is dangerous in itself. We feel we have a right to make these investments and talk quite casually about the price of fame. When we talk of this, we are often referring to the negative impact that fame often has on celebrities - the drink, the drugs, the neuroticism, the monstrous egotism, the lack of privacy, the failure of relationships and so on. We talk of these "prices" as if we have the right to charge them, as if they are assumed to be worth paying. Jill Dando was not assuming any of these prices. She was normal, well-adjusted, happy. And instead the price of her fame has been the ultimate one. Surely, in our celebrity-obsessed, intrusive, prurient culture, there is something to be learned from this.

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AMBITION

DON'T HOLD BACK.

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British Midland
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Justice for all

Sir: I must take issue with Anthony Scrivener QC (Comment, 26 April) on his sideswipe at High Court judges going out on circuit. Somewhat irrationally, he delivers it on the basis that litigants should not have to travel a long way to have their cases (or some aspect of them) heard before a High Court judge. He complains bitterly at barristers and others having to travel to Bristol from London to have a case heard there when it had no connection with Bristol, except that it was where the judge happened to be sitting.

Until the recent transfer of some judicial review sittings to the Northern Circuit from London, I felt much the same way at having to explain to clients why a wholly North-Western judicial review case could only be heard in London, whereas (for example) a professional negligence action or major criminal case could be heard close to home by a High Court judge sitting on circuit, even though the same judge could hear the judicial review case when sitting in London.

Litigants outside London should be able to get convenient justice in their regions equivalent to that available in London to Londoners. High Court judges sitting on this circuit now hear almost the whole range of work from the Queen's Bench, Family and Chancery Divisions.

High Court judges represent the highest quality pool of judicial expertise available nationally. That whole pool should be available to litigants nationally and not just in the capital.

Mr Scrivener's complaint at having to be dragged to Bristol should be directed at the judge in question, not to the circuit system.

ANDREW GILBART QC
Manchester

Nato's world role?

Sir: Andrew Marshall ("EU defence force moves step closer", 26 April) states that Nato's new Strategy Concept "is not quite the commitment to a global Nato some in the US had wanted", since it is limited to an ill-defined "Euro-Atlantic area".

However, Chapter 24 of that same Strategic Concept uses language which makes this geographical limitation look somewhat less certain. It states: "However, Alliance security must also take account of the global context. Alliance security interests can be affected by other risks of a wider nature, including acts of terrorism, sabotage and organised crime, and by the disruption of the flow of vital resources ... Arrangements exist within the Alliance under Article 4 of the Washington Treaty and, where appropriate, co-ordination of their efforts including their responses to risks of this kind."

Does this mean that Nato will in fact be able to conduct out-of-area operations in the future?

TOM McDONALD
British American Security
Information Council
London SE1

Names for genocide

Sir: Alex Callinicos (letter, 23 April) states that the comparison between Hitler and Milosevic, made by Ken Livingstone and others, is unsustainable and that the word "genocide" has been wrongly used to describe the actions of Milosevic in Kosovo. He also claims we have a duty to make moral distinctions.

So let us not call these actions genocide. Let us call them what they are: mass murder, rape, theft, destruction of property and the eviction of tens of thousands of citizens from their homes on the basis of their ethnic origins. Having got the terms right, it now becomes clearer that Nato's attempts to rectify this are totally wrong and that Milosevic is not in any sense to be compared to Hitler but is just a single-minded ruler doing a necessary job that unfortunately involves committing



City Allotments No 3: A BT telephone kiosk contributes to the construction of a greenhouse at Witton & District allotments in Birmingham Andrew Fox

"atrocities" that are "undeniably wicked and barbarous" (Professor Callinicos's words).

But as these atrocities fall short of genocide, Nato's war is "full of foolishness". If they could be classed as genocide, Nato's war presumably would be sensible and just. It is not Ken Livingstone's logic that has been exposed by Professor Callinicos's letter, but his own.

Jewish survivors of the Holocaust must be viewing the events unfolding in Kosovo with horror and many will be appalled at the attempts of academics such as Professor Callinicos to invoke the uniqueness of their terror as a means of somehow downgrading the plight of the Kosovar Albanians into a less extreme form of human suffering, thereby questioning the morality of their would-be liberators and giving succour to the perpetrator of the atrocities.

There may well be a moral distinction between the two acts of barbarism, as Professor Callinicos claims. There are times, however, when we should be more aware of moral similarities.

STUART RUSSELL
Cirencester,
Gloucestershire

Sir: First we bomb a railway bridge, so cutting the main European international rail connection between Greece and Central Europe, when we could just have bombed the branch line going off from there into Kosovo. Then the bombing of Danube bridges cut that international waterway.

Now there has been extensive bombing of rail installations at Nis, which have presumably cut the European international rail route from Central Europe to Bulgaria and Turkey. Downstream of Yugoslavia the next rail crossing of the Danube is not until level with Bucharest, making a distinctly longer route from Central Europe to Turkey and an extremely long way round to western Bulgaria and Greece, even if the railways

thereabouts have the capacity to cope with extra traffic.

Not being a military man, I pass no judgement on the rights and wrongs of bombing things purely Serbian towards a just cause, but I do take exception to the destruction of pan-European transport infrastructure, which will take a long time to rebuild.

Why can't we at least consider and negotiate on the Russian peace offer?

H TREVOR JONES
Guildford,
Surrey

Sir: Those with principled objections to the Kosovar war have no party to vote for in the coming local and other elections. They are all equally in favour of this conflict. I suggest that everyone who is against the war spoil his or her ballot paper by writing "peace" across it and placing a cross next to the word. Not only will that be a measure of public opinion, but if Labour is deprived of a majority in the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and some local authorities, it will be both justified

and welcome, given that it is the Labour government which has led us into this disaster.

DAVID MASON
Newcastle upon Tyne

Sir: Isn't it odd that while the Church Commissioners, as the Church of England's financial leaders, rule out investment in British Aerospace on ethical grounds (letter, 24 April), the Archbishop of Canterbury, as its spiritual leader, says that the bombing of Yugoslavia "no doubt" aided by weaponry designed and manufactured by that same company is morally justified?

RICHARD RAYFIELD
Corbridge, Northumberland

Right to be gay

Sir: Michael Bell (letter, 24 April) may not be right that the electorate are two-thirds against lowering the homosexual age of consent. One reputable opinion poll conducted by NOP showed the electorate supporting this measure by 60 per cent to 40 per cent.

However, rather than argue about where the majority is, I will

argue that human rights issues should not be settled simply by invoking the majority principle. It is those to whom the majority does not wish to deny human rights, not those to whom it does not, whose human rights stand in need of protection.

If Mr Bell wishes to deny that an equal age of consent is a human rights issue, he should remember that the point is at present before the European Court of Human Rights. The preliminary opinion of the court's commission is that it is a human rights issue, and that if we do not pass the Bill, we are in breach of articles 8 and 14 of the European Convention of Human Rights. Is this something Mr Bell thinks majority support can justify?

EARL RUSSELL
House of Lords

Sir: Michael Bell does not seem to see that equal rights are not a possession of the public or the House of Lords to confer or withhold, but are part of natural justice itself.

The first votes for women were reluctantly accorded only to the

over-30s, against all sort of specious claims that young women matured later than men or would be politically irresponsible.

Now we hear the same sort of wild generalisations - that a consenting 16- to 18-year-old man is less competent and more vulnerable in a same-sex sexual relationship than any woman of the same age. This, too, is blatant bigotry and sexism.

The issue is not what people may do with their maturing political or sexual drives. They may vote for governments which I do not like or choose erotic techniques which might repel me. But if they do not threaten my own freedom I have no right to control or threaten theirs.

EDWARD TURNBULL
Gosforth, Northumberland

Libraries in decline

Sir: Dr Eamonn Butler of the Adam Smith Institute rightly draws attention to the decline in the standard of the services offered by most public libraries (letter, 23 April). He speaks of libraries as "part of the leisure industry". Here is the cause of part of the problem.

Once, libraries were always a separate department of local government, with the Chief Librarian enjoying the status of a chief officer. With re-organisation of local government, libraries are now lumped together in unsuitable groupings, usually part of a leisure department. What do libraries have in common with parks, swimming baths, leisure centres, and, in some instances, cemeteries? If libraries can no longer stand alone in the local government hierarchy, a link with education would be more appropriate.

While libraries are statistics-led, and librarians prefer to spend money on 10 copies of a paperback edition of a romantic novel rather than on one copy of a serious biography, standards will continue to fall.

MICHAEL WALPOLE
Birmingham

No flowers

Sir: I suppose that it is too late to ask people not to waste their money on flowers for Jill Dando and to give it to charity instead? Flowers do not last and are not cheap. The amount of money spent could do so much more if it was given to charity instead of to florists.

There seems to be a contest to see who or what garners most floral support after tragedy - Hillsborough, Dunblane, Diana. Let's break this cycle of waste and start a new culture of charitable giving "in the name of..."

The press could help by announcing the charities Jill supported.

PAUL SMITH
Caterham, Surrey

Perils on the Net

Sir: It is probable that a number of factors led to the tragic events in Columbine High School, in the USA, but the availability of information - by whatever medium - is unlikely to be the prime cause. It is important that this is remembered as the United States and the world ask themselves how an incident as shocking as this can have occurred.

The majority of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the UK already "regulate" content, and will remove articles or entire websites, following notification by the police or the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF). However, the nature of the Internet makes it impossible to prevent such material being placed online initially, and there are no globally agreed standards by which ISPs act.

"Filtering" software can go some way towards preventing access to "undesirable" material, but it is at best a blunt sword, blocking some sites erroneously, failing to block others, and subject to the moral philosophy of the software producers and their agents.

I suggest that the best approach is a combination of the content rating system being proposed by the IWF (which allows parents and guardians to make their own judgements), and co-operation between agencies to apprehend individuals who publish illegal material, regardless of whether it appears on the Net.

ALAN STEVENS
Editor, "Which? Online"
The Consumers Association
London NW1

Sir: As well as lax American gun laws and violent pop culture, a third factor needs to be considered in the Denver and other school shootings, and should in principle be more easily controllable. This is the large size of schools.

Criminological research in the US has consistently shown a close correlation between violence and vandalism by pupils (both inside and outside school) and the number of pupils in a school. No similar research has been done in Britain, but there is little doubt that it would show the same result.

School building programmes in both countries over the past 40 years therefore constitute one of several ways in which government spending has been the problem, not the solution.

F KNOX
London SW4

As she is spoke

Sir: Never mind mispronunciation (letters, 24, 26, 27 April). When will people who should know better stop saying "bought" instead of "brought"? I dare say the current debate will soon reach a crescendo.

KEITH BARTLETT
Fishguard, Pembrokeshire

Sir: After filling us children with the delights of the Romantic poets and the sonnets of Shakespeare, our beloved Miss Condon would turn to her class and finish with: "Of course, you know that the best English is spoken here in Dublin. We know how to pronounce our Rs."

GERALDINE BURKE
Marsh Baldon, Oxfordshire

Breaking, entering and checking out the wall colour

A MOST extraordinary trial is going on at the moment at the High Court, in which a married couple is accused of the crime of breaking and entering a neighbouring house. The extraordinary aspect of the trial is their defence plea, which is that they merely wished to have a look round. But perhaps a brief extract from yesterday's proceedings will give a better idea of a case which promises to make legal history.

Counsel: You are Mr and Mrs Whittle?

Whittle: No, I am Mr Whittle.

Counsel: But when you are with your wife you are Mr and Mrs Whittle?

Whittle: No, I am still Mr Whittle when I am together with my wife.

Counsel: I see. Are you often together?

Whittle: We have been together now for 17 years.

Counsel: So, you've been married for 17 years?

Whittle: No, we've been married for 19 years.

Counsel: How is it possible that you have been married for more years than you have been together?

Whittle: I had to go abroad on business for two years from 1987 to 1989. During that time we could hardly have been said to be together.

Counsel: I see. What sort of business took you abroad?

Whittle: I had to go on a weekend sales trip to the Lebanon.

Counsel: And that took two years?

Whittle: Yes. During my weekend in Beirut I was captured and held as a hostage for two years by a militant Palestinian organisation.

Counsel: I am sorry to hear that.

Whittle: Not as sorry as I was, or indeed my wife was.

Judge: Mr Widebeest, I fail to see the point of this line of questioning. If Mr and Mrs Whittle are up on a charge of breaking and entering, why are you delving into his commercial history?

Counsel: The idea is to confuse him with apparently random questions, my Lord, until when he is off guard, I can swoop and disconcert him with strategically placed queries, like a picador weakening a bull.

Judge: It's not working yet, is it?

Counsel: No, my Lord.

Judge: I think you'll find that it's the banderillero who swoops in the bull-ring. The picador merely shuffles around on a condemned nag.

Counsel: You're right, my Lord.

Judge: Carry on, smarty pants.

Counsel: Now, Mr Whittle, on 17

July last year, were you and your wife together?

Whittle: We were.

Counsel: You were not on some mysterious trip to the Middle East?

Whittle: No, we were at home in our small Hampshire village of Fenton Bresler.

Counsel: You were not at home all the time, I believe?

Whittle: No, we were also in the house of Sir Edgar and Lady Truelove, the Manor House, which is 500 yards from us.

Counsel: Had you been invited to go in there?

Whittle: No.

Counsel: So you had broken and entered the Manor House?

Whittle: No. We merely entered. No breaking was involved. The front door was open.

Counsel: What on earth possessed you to enter someone else's home without permission?

Whittle: Well, at that particular

time, we were planning to repaint the hall, sitting-room and staircase of our own home, and my wife and I could never agree on what colour paints we wanted. The problem was made worse by the fact that modern colour cards, however well printed, never give the real effect of what the paint will look like in real life. Ask any painter or decorator. Counsel: I intend to.

Whittle: My wife happened to mention that she had seen a rather nice cream paint in the Trueloves' hall when she had been there for a WI meeting, and thought we ought to have a look at it. So the next time we were passing we took our courage in both hands and knocked on the door to ask the Trueloves if we could have a look. There was no answer. We tried looking through the window. The light was not good

enough. I tried the door handle. It turned and the door opened. Without quite realising what we were doing, we went in and had a look. We were still in the house when the Trueloves returned.

Counsel: But not in the hall, I think? You were found upstairs in the bedroom?

Whittle: Yes, well, that was because we didn't really like the colour in the hall. It was a bit on the yellow side, a bit drab. Quite apart from anything else, it reminded me uncannily of the wall colour of the room in which I was kept hostage for two years. So my wife said she thought there was a nicer shade of barley cream on the landing upstairs, and we just popped upstairs to have a look...

More of this fascinating case some other time, I hope.



MILES
KINGTON

'My wife had seen a rather nice cream in the hall and thought we ought to have a look'

July last year, were you and your wife together?

Whittle: We were.

A hope
Nato S
on bor

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A hopeful sign, but Nato should keep on bombing Serbia

THE ART of diplomacy is in the timing as much as the substance – and, for the first time in the Kosovo crisis, diplomacy's hour seems to be upon us. Two factors have been responsible for the sudden shift in climate. One was last week's Nato summit in Washington; the other was the unexpected voice of the Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, Vuk Draskovic, suggesting that the hitherto monolithic facade of the Belgrade leadership is starting to crack.

Mr Draskovic has warned Serbs that they are alone, that Nato remains united, and that the destructive bombing will continue. For its part, the summit has shown that a Nato ground invasion, the surest guarantee of a speedy end to the war, is not on the cards, and that weeks, maybe months, of bombing will be needed if the Allies are to prevail. For both sides, in short, the last few days have been what the Americans call a "reality check", upon which the diplomats perhaps can build. And they are trying.

Yesterday Strobe Talbott, the US Deputy Secretary of State, was in Moscow talking to Viktor Chernomyrdin, Russia's special envoy in Kosovo and the most plausible mediator of any settlement. Mr Talbott is being followed by Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, the body that was sidelined before the conflict, but which will play a large part in implementing a solution to it. Later this week Mr Chernomyrdin is expected to visit Belgrade, for the second time in 10 days.

And all this is going on against a backdrop of political argument in Belgrade, with talk of serious grumbling among the generals, and rumours of mass mutiny in the ranks – factors that ought to nudge President Milosevic towards a climb-down. But let us not get carried away by wishful thinking.

Of course, a speedy diplomatic solution is fervently to be desired. But it must be the right diplomatic solution. Nato's original five demands for a settlement have, to some extent, been overtaken by events. For the Allies, there are now three non-negotiable conditions: the total withdrawal of Yugoslav forces from Kosovo, the introduction of a peace-keeping force with a strong Nato component and, most important of all, the return of the refugees to their homes.

Outrage at the plight of the Kosovo Albanians was the reason why Nato embarked upon this ill-executed war. Anything less than their return to a secure Kosovo will amount to a Nato defeat. Alas, the West's understandable eagerness to mend fences with the Russians may be blinding it to the fact that these conditions are perhaps not quite the ones Mr Chernomyrdin is putting to Mr Milosevic – and that, in any case, there is no sign that the Yugoslav leader is listening.

Among the many lessons of this crisis is that to Slobodan Milosevic normal standards of reason do not



A disturbing trend in our modern society

THE MURDER of Jill Dando is deeply shocking. The brutal killing of this talented broadcaster has understandably captured the country's horrified attention.

Already, similarities can be observed between our response to the tragic death of Ms Dando and that to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The Queen and the Prime Minister have expressed their sadness; the BBC has made available a book for the public to write its condolences; people have begun to lay floral bouquets and messages at the gates of the BBC and at Ms Dando's home.

It is nothing new for people to be upset by the death of a prominent person. In the 19th century, the death of General Gordon elicited widespread public mourning; more recently, thousands queued all night to pay their respects

to Sir Winston Churchill as he lay in state. One suspects, however, that Ms Dando would have been puzzled by the emotions she has sparked off. For she was neither hero nor statesman. Instead, she was a television presenter whose likeable and uncomplicated character appears to have found a resonance in her audience.

But what do the growing piles of flowers and the torrent of e-mails to the BBC tell us about our modern society? Certainly, it is good to see that the notoriously buttoned-up British are not ashamed to express their emotions freely. However, there is also something disturbing about this outpouring of grief. It suggests an emptiness in too many people's lives that is filled by those they do not really know. We should question the tendency of many Britons to divert the love that should be given to family and friends to people who appear on television and on the covers of magazines.

These outpourings do not honour the memory of the modest Ms Dando. At a time when the nation is embarked on war, they smack of recreational grief.

Amid the din of war, listen out for the politician who keeps silent

STOP A minute; pause amid the war talk and revelations of those botched internal divisions behind the cool New Labour facade. When politics is noisy it is worth listening out for those keeping the most eloquent silences.

The senior member of Government going about his business most smoothly and quietly these days is the Chancellor, Gordon Brown. His enemies may gloat that "Gordon hasn't had a war at all", meaning that he hasn't been on the television sounding statesmanlike. I see no sign that Gordon resents this. The Chancellors do not warm to wars. They interfere with the accounting. Mr Brown's success in office has been the result of his ability to exploit relatively small room for manoeuvre and magnify the impact of the results by some nifty presentation.

So far, he has studiously avoided acknowledging that there is a war on at all. Early on, he remarked that the contingency fund of some £1.2bn was covering the costs. But money gets spent a lot faster than this in a war – some £20m from Britain so far. So the Treasury made a brief statement last week announcing that an "audit of war" was under way to check the running costs of the enterprise. This was so discreetly announced, with Mr Brown at a safe distance in Scotland, that it went unnoticed.

But the subject will soon be unavoidable. An unintentionally ironic point is made on the implications of the conflict by Maurice Saatchi's and Peter Warburton's pamphlet calling on the Tories to kneecap Peter Lilley and all the other born-again Big Spenders and opt for lower tax rates instead:

"With the formation of a new government by the Liberals following the 1995 election came a change in the way taxation was viewed: from a means of supporting wars to a way of supporting the people."

Well, something has to give, to support the war effort, and raised taxes and/or heavy government borrowing are a distinct possibility. Some of those opposed to Britain fighting Slobodan Milosevic at all have been so carried away by their desire for the Government to fare ill that they are prophesying dire consequences for Mr Brown. On this view, his reputation as the Iron Chancellor will be undermined when the bills come in.

Mr Brown looks to me like a Chancellor who has prepared himself for just such a development. His very description on the war and its costs is the first plank in his survival strategy. By making clear that he is not a front-line political figure in this conflict, he is also ensuring that the blame for any financially unpleasant domestic consequences does not rest on him. If it does cost us higher taxes, no one will fairly be able to blame him for raising them. That event will be seen, for better or worse, to have been the result of Mr Blair's wholehearted engagement in the Balkans.

The outcome of the war remains uncertain, as is its aftermath in British politics. Mr Blair has so far looked like a confident leader, out-hawking some rather tentative American hawks. But a more difficult hour may come. If the outcome in Kosovo is an unstable fudge, the last thing the Prime Minister wants – or deserves,



ANNE MC ELVOY

If the war does cost us higher taxes, no one will fairly be able to blame Mr Brown for raising them

given his own robust stance – is to end up having to pass off a failure as a success.

Mr Brown, meanwhile, has consigned himself to a bloodless but more certainly glorious battlefield – the Scottish elections, where the only question is the margin of New Labour's victory. This is not the way things looked early this year when the Government drew up its plans for the scrap with the SNP and concluded that Donald Dewar desperately needed the help of another big hitter with appeal to the Scottish electorate. As I understand it, the Chancellor saw this as something of an onerous duty for someone of his seniority. In his darker moments he may have muttered something about these English modernisers being all very well in their place, but the Labour Party still

needing its Scottish backbone when real challenges present themselves.

Yet the election has given Mr Brown the opportunity to pitch his tent firmly on the reassuring turf of Britishness, and to appear as an inclusive politician who incorporates both a distinctly Scottish and a United Kingdom identity.

He used his intellectual base, the John Smith Institute, to deliver a major speech on Britishness earlier this month. The association with the legacy of the late Labour leader, John Smith, is a sign that Mr Brown sees himself as the continuation of the moderate Labour tradition, as opposed to the conscious mould-breaking that Mr Blair embodies. It is a distinction that will doubtless be drawn again this summer when the fifth anniversary of Mr Smith's death is commemorated.

In Scotland, Mr Brown is free to indulge as much sentimentality about the memory of Mr Smith as he likes; it does no harm in the late Mr Smith's homeland, whereas the Blairites always feared that Mr Smith's old-fashioned aura and reluctant embrace of the middle classes were an electoral liability in the south of England. Never think that these old differences have ceased to matter. New Labour is shaped by the failures of the past, which means that it can never escape the memories.

None the less, Mr Brown mustered the magnanimity to ask his old feuding partner Peter Mandelson up to Glasgow to dispense some strategy advice for the final phase of the election campaign. In the laying bare of the 1997 rivalries at New Labour's

court, Mr Brown emerges in the most enviable position of all his senior colleagues.

Take the now famous chapter in Don MacIntyre's biography in which Mr Mandelson leaves a planning meeting abruptly after a disagreement with the shadow Chancellor and offers his resignation as campaign manager. Mr Blair writes back, with half an eye on the political record, "We are not players in some Greek tragedy." Geoffrey Robinson, the kindly plutocrat, seeks to calm down Mr Mandelson over lunch, with singularly little success. All is flurry, spin and high emotion. What does Mr Brown do? Very little. You gain the impression of a rather stolid creature in the middle of all the fuss, imperviously getting on with the election.

This is an intriguing change from the more frequently peddled picture of Mr Brown as a tortured soul, unable to recover from having had the mantle of Labour leadership snatched from him by Mr Blair. Indeed, once Mr Mandelson became a minister the Chancellor allowed his Treasury court to pursue the old lead by proxy. Ministers fought a dirty war on both sides and Mr Mandelson was the ultimate victim. Perhaps the cathartic force of this outcome has brought both of them to their senses; perhaps the Chancellor is simply finding it easier to be well-adjusted when Mr Mandelson is down on his luck. But a certain peacefulness has descended on the turbulent heart of New Labour.

You might almost think that the boys had grown up at last. On past evidence, we can only wonder how long the sanity will last.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Remember, they only name things after you when you're dead or really old."

Barbara Bush at the naming ceremony for the George Bush Centre for Intelligence

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build a bridge even where there's no river."

Nikita Khrushchev,
Soviet statesman



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ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

The Indian press anticipates India's third general election in three years

of well-defined and clearly spelt-out common agendas before seeking the mandate.

The Hindu

IF ONLY our political leaders

past three years, three governments were brought down, not over any contentious national issues or on a matter of principle, but on personal whims and ambitions.

Hindustan Times

THE MESSAGE people are likely to send out in these elections, as in the last two electoral exercises, is that they rely no more on the government of the day for roti, kapda and makaan, but it is their leadership that

they lament. The voter fears that whatever the hawa that blows, it will be the same hot air.

Times of India

ONE HOPES that the 13th Lok Sabha will throw up a government that will have a stable majority and the resolution to rise above partisan pressures and act in these and other complex matters confronting it, in a manner that serves the national interest.

The Pioneer

PANDORA

"I'M PRIVILEGED to have gone to the moon. People's perceptions change of you - but life is all about meeting real people," Buzz Aldrin told a space cadet at Sound Republic this week. Givenchy themed the booth with *Futuroma* elements to hype its deal with the astronaut. Once he steered spaceships, now he sells scents. That's (millennial) life, kiddo.

MUST READ for the glossy posse this week is a pirate copy of *Versease Undressed*, an unauthorised biography of the murdered Italian couturier. Scheduled for publication in July, *Undressed* contains many lively and entertaining insights into the fashion industry.

SO IT'S A Knockout returns to the ring; may Pandora be the first to plead for a reprise for *Tizwas*?

IT'S A date. The numbers are in - and how - on what we should call the decade following the Nineties. Pandora's People overwhelmingly prefer "the Noughties" (and its variant spellings) - but the "Double Zero", "Yukkies" (that's a Y2K thing), "Nothings" and "Teenies" also win minority support. Precision points to Reading's Kate Tompkins for suggesting that the Teenies "would only really apply from 2013 to 2019".

MEXID MESSAGES? Let's clarify the buzz about the ad that ran in this newspaper's front section earlier this month. Everyone's talking about the crash hot lay-out and twisted type; but eagle-eyed readers rapidly sussed that the stunt highlighted the plight of MS sufferers. Saatchi & Saatchi's Greg Martin and Mike McKenna had 60 minutes to produce the ad from *The Independent's* raw copy as it went to press. Legible versions of the stories appeared on the page after the ad; a strip at the bottom of the page explained: "MS scrambles messages between the brain and the body." Top marks to *Creative Review*, the first trade book to spot the decode.

DANI BEHR (pictured) - who numbers Christian Slater, Les Ferdinand and George Clooney among the beaus on her string - is back before the camera. "I was an actor before I was a presenter," Behr insisted at the première party for David Cronenberg's *ExistenZ* the other night. "As far as I'm concerned, I'm returning to my first love."

The former presenter of *The Word*, a dumb and duster youth TV show, plays the receptionist role in the thriller *Rancid Aluminium*. But South African-born

Dani found location work with Sadie Frost and Tara Fitzgerald a chore.

"After filming for a couple of weeks in Wales, I was hungry for the creature comforts of home."

Just as well former fancy Ryan Giggs never took her back to meet his folks, isn't it, although Pandora always rated Behr as one of Giggs's top scores.

PADDY ASHDOWN'S Yeovil constituency is up for grabs. Perhaps the selection committee will consider the life-long Liberal Nicholas Parsons. Parsons turned down the chance to become the candidate in 1976. Would it be hesitation, repetition or deviation for him to have another pop?

OH, AND have you noticed more people in the street apparently talking to themselves? Reality is that they're using the new hands-free gizmo that allows mobile phone users to hum their gums without frying their brains. Sure, it's a civilisation advance; but feisty types are bending Pandora's ear to bitch about these mumbler suddenly stopping in their tracks and creating pedestrian pile-ups. Since the walkie-talkies aren't worried about looking like zombies, perhaps they wouldn't mind wearing a revolving light on top of their noggin to warn others that they're in chat mode. Unless anyone else has a better idea...?

Contact Pandora by e-mail: pandora@independent.co.uk



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Vin rouge for la vie en rose



SUE ARNOLD

Presumably it was on medical grounds that the supermarket across the road changed its layout recently and quadrupled the size of its wine department, and particularly its stock of half bottles of red wine, so much more convenient for frail little old ladies (like me) to slip into their baskets along with a tin of sardines and a nice apple turnover.

I'm perfectly happy to go along with the red wine theory. Writing in a medical journal called *Heart* some time ago, a French doctor came up with the following statistics. In Toulouse, 75 out of 100,000 people die from heart disease. In Belfast, 348

out of 100,000 die from coronary-related diseases and, in Glasgow, it's even higher, 380. *Alors*, concluded M le Medecin, if the natives of Glasgow and Belfast drank as much red wine as the good burghers of Toulouse, instead of all that filthy stout and Scotch, their hearts would be in better nick.

Maybe so, but you could say the same about garlic, which may not

have been the subject of the survey but was almost certainly consumed in the same proportions, per capita, as red wine in Toulouse, Belfast and Glasgow. I have long subscribed to the view that garlic is a cure-all for most diseases, especially the coronary kind, an opinion shared by many of my French, Italian and Polish friends. "Oh, you mean *Continents*," my late aunt Winnie would have said, pursing her lips as if she'd bitten on a lemon. *Continents* basically meant anyone who wasn't born in Pinner. Well, maybe they are but they're also incredibly healthy.

My friend Woytek, a Pole, whose family has a history of heart disease, chews whole cloves of raw garlic as others chew gum. At 60 he can sit like a teenager. When he was a child his mother, he told me, used to stuff the toes of his boots with garlic to stop him catching cold as he walked to school.

My French friend Annalise puts garlic in everything, including her Christmas cake, and feeds garlic capsules to her dog to cure its breathlessness. It's a very old, very

smelly, very bad-tempered dog and the sooner it is relieved of its breath, most of her friends and family agree, the better. But Annalise is soft-hearted.

It seems that the supermarket across the road has been taking advice from *Continents* because it now sells not one, but four varieties of garlic. As well as drinking more red wine, we also appear to be eating more garlic, which is probably why we're not falling off our perch as much as we were from heart attacks.

We used to be so priggish about garlic. "Ugh, you smell like a Spanish waiter," my fastidious room mate would say to her boyfriends. Ten years later she took her kids on holiday to Fuengirola and ran off with one. Garlic is a funny thing. If you chew it raw, like Woytek, it smells perfectly pleasant. If you cook it for hours it doesn't smell at all. It's only if you fry it for 10 minutes that the aroma seems to linger behind your teeth for days.

It was my Italian friend Lucia who taught me to roast whole cloves of garlic in their skins, sprinkled with olive oil, and then squeeze them like

toothpaste on to toast as a cure for heartburn. Or hiccups. Or just because they're delicious. I saw her yesterday and we talked about her heart report. "Darleeng," said Lucia. "Garlic is good for the heart, of course, but irrigation is better."

She had just come back from two weeks in a Portuguese detox clinic where she had eaten no garlic, no food at all in fact, just organic fruit juice and Thylium Husk three times a day. She was now totally cleansed - her blood, her skin, her heart.

Thylium Husk, apparently, is a natural fibre which can absorb 50 times its own weight in toxins. What was the point of the Thylium Husk, I said. Lucia said it helped wash out toxins that had been festering in your intestines for years, poisoning your system, clogging your blood. For the first time in her life, she said, she felt pure. Did she look pure? Well, I said, hedging. "Darleeng, if you could only see what they found in my intestines. There were traces of mother's milk. Imagine. 35-year-old milk." I'd rather not. Come on, let's chew some garlic, it's easier, I said.

THE DAY

before the Brixton bomb I had a letter from the "White Wolves" identical with that received by Oona King and other parliamentary colleagues, but, given the number of death threats I have had, it just went into the bin. Yesterday, however, I received a letter claiming to be from Combat 18 which had been posted the day before the Brick Lane bomb, saying there would be another nail bomb attack next day in an "alien" area. It listed Southall, Golders Green, Kilburn, Petticoat Lane and Brent as potential areas.

I passed it to the police. They are now examining it for any evidence they may be able to extract, although, of course, it could just be another sick hoax.

Over the years, I have been attacked by racists on several occasions. Most of these incidents took place in the early Eighties at the height of press hysteria about the Greater London Council. I clearly remember my first warning from Special Branch officers, who arrived at County Hall to tell me the disturbing news that my movements were being monitored by an extremist group. However, because I lived in a bedsit and travelled by public transport there was, apparently, little they could do to protect me. An attack eventually did take place, taking the form of my being sprayed with red paint by two members of the National Front masquerading as "Friends of Ulster".

Through long experience, I have tended to ignore death threats unless accompanied by a warning from Special Branch that I am once again under surveillance from the far right.

As I am still alive I suppose the police have been justified in not providing the appropriate resources at these times. The best I ever got was when a psychiatric patient released under the care in the community programme was known to be trying

to buy a gun in order to kill me. My local police offered to walk me to and from the Tube each day, which was the best they could do given the cuts in police numbers during the final days of the Tory Home Secretary Michael Howard.

I have always viewed Combat 18, however, as an altogether more worrying organisation. They have sometimes recruited embittered former members of the military and therefore have been trained in the use of weapons and attack. A few years ago they totally trashed the Kilburn Book Shop for the crime of stocking Irish and left-wing literature. The whole operation, undertaken with military precision, took hardly any time. A car screeched to a halt on Kilburn High Road and four balaclava-clad thugs destroyed the inside of the shop and were away within five minutes, never to be apprehended.

Despite the lessons of the Lawrence Inquiry, which underlined the way that the police and other authorities tend to dismiss or play down racial motivation in violent crimes against black people, it was disheartening to see so many people

who should have known better rushing to deny that the Brixton bomb could have been a racial attack.

When Lee Jasper, the secretary of the National Black Alliance, said that black people in the area would regard this as an attack on them, his comments were largely ignored. His views were even attacked on the grounds that Brixton is a "multi-racial" area. But, compared with all the economic targets that could be attacked in London, Brixton's only attraction for a bomber is its status as a symbol of black Britain.

To their credit, the Metropolitan Police did consider the racial option, and even went so far as to release details of Combat 18's claim of responsibility, ghoulishly made from a phone box in Well Hall Road where Stephen Lawrence was murdered. This area of south-east London, which has housed the BNP headquarters, has become known as the racist murder capital of Britain following the brutal deaths of young black men - Stephen Lawrence, Rohit Duggal and Rolan Adams.

The fact that so many attacks and murders continue to take place against black and Asian people is a brutal reality only partly acknowledged in wider British society. The advances represented by the Lawrence Inquiry appear to be the motivation behind the bombings.

According to a leaked internal document of one of the terror groups linked to the bombings, the White Wolves, the main target was the black communities: "If this is done regularly, effectively and brutally, the aliens will respond by attacking the whites at random, forcing them off the fence and into self-defence."

This is a declaration of a race war with its clear aim being to roll back the recommendations of the Lawrence report, and it should be dealt with as such by the police and the Government.

In just a few weeks the Fascist

streets and give a good kicking to the first black man they find?

British race relations have arrived at a crossroads. It is not now simply an issue of rounding up a few nutters, but of reshaping how our major institutions deal with racism and black representation.

whose civil liberties do we protect by allowing such people the right of access to such resources? Only those who stand to gain from the death and maiming that arise from their politics. Combat 18 and other such groups should be apprehended and the BNP should be banned from gaining the rights accorded to genuine political parties in the coming elections. We should ban the BNP, which is no more than a racist criminal conspiracy.

There will be those who argue that freedom of speech must extend even to views as abhorrent as those of the BNP and Combat 18. Yet no one suggests that we should allow paedophiles freedom to advocate child abuse. How many young thugs will be encouraged by the next BNP

political broadcast to go out on to the

streets and give a good kicking to the first black man they find?

British race relations have arrived at a crossroads. It is not now simply an issue of rounding up a few nutters, but of reshaping how our major institutions deal with racism and black representation.

Jack Straw's commitment to extending the 1976 Race Relations Act to the police and other previously exempt institutions is a welcome first step.

In 1977 the National Front won 5 per cent of Londoners' votes at the GLC elections. In Hackney North I made the issue of the National Front candidate the major part of my election campaign, in contrast to other Labour candidates in the area who argued that we should ignore them totally. The result was that the NF vote in my seat was only half what they managed to achieve in the rest of the area. The lesson is clear: we can't ignore the Fascists in the hope that they will go away. We must take them on and defeat them using all the powers of the state and with the hacking of local communities. And we must start now.

A new vision built on old foundations



PODIUM

PRINCE CHARLES
From a speech by
the Prince of Wales to
the Making Heritage
Industrial Buildings
Work conference
in Swindon

itiouous programme to build new towns. Millions were moved from congested cities to new expanded towns with modern houses and workplaces. Lives were transformed for the better. But at a price. It took many years for communities to become established, and we have the phenomenon of "new town blues".

Surely a better way forward

is to promote the process of inventing communities where people already live, and recognise the value of the investment both in people and the built environment that already exists, rather than abandon it.

After the last war, and right up to the Seventies, governments carried through an am-

bition to live and work, and will want simply to be.

I am not talking about the restoration of these buildings just because of their architecture, nor the creation of "Heritage Theme-Park Britain" where we repack our heritage for the benefit of tourists.

But there is no doubt that these buildings and the environment in which they stand, can provide a uniquely attractive atmosphere for modern living and working. We need to rediscover the ingredients for such an atmosphere and try to emulate them in the future.

It was the great American urban historian, Lewis Mumford, who wrote that "if we would lay the foundation for a new urban life, we must first understand the historic nature of the city". As we wrestle with the regeneration of so many of our urban communities, finding successful new uses for remarkable old buildings is a very tangible way of retaining just such an understanding. When all is said and done, I believe we owe something to those craftsmen who built these buildings with such skill and pride.

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Say goodbye to your local GP



JEREMY LAURANCE

While 24-hour shopping and TV are taken for granted, medical advice remains hard to obtain

WHEN DID you last see your doctor? I ask because it is entirely possible you do not know who he or she is. A recent government survey showed that one in four patients waits at least four days for an appointment with their GP but my own completely unscientific poll of friends and colleagues suggests this is a conservative estimate. The Radio 4 Today presenter James Naughtie recently complained he had had to wait two weeks and delays of up to four weeks are not uncommon.

In these circumstances, it makes sense to opt for whoever can see you first. Most patients - with the important exception of the chronically ill, who make regular visits to the surgery - want rapid treatment and are less concerned about who provides it. But that means that the link with the personal family doctor is weakened.

In a society in which round-the-clock shopping, banking and TV are taken for granted, medical advice remains astonishingly hard to obtain. GPs' surgeries are open for a couple of hours morning and evening, and if you cannot get an early appointment the only alternative is to queue for a couple of hours in the walk-in surgery.

As the Prime Minister noted in a speech to GPs earlier this month, although most patients are happy with the care they get, they are less happy with how long they have to wait for it.

That is about to change. The scale of the change that is planned has been unheralded and little written about. Put simply it is to replace GPs with nurses as the first point of contact for patients. This change will fundamentally alter the way patients obtain medical treatment, by opening up a new gateway to the NHS. It could even spell the end of the traditional GP.

Major changes in social institutions are always difficult to date. But the winter crisis in the NHS last Christmas may have set the seal on a process whose origins can be traced back years or even decades.

There were four days over the holiday when hospital casualty departments were overwhelmed with patients suffering from flu. Beds were full, trolleys were



A general practitioner with his patient in south London, 50 years ago; but perhaps nurses should take over the role traditionally played by GPs

Hulton Getty

wheeled out and the health service found itself unable to cope.

Nothing new there, of course. But when the causes of the winter crisis were investigated, it was GPs who got the blame. Because Christmas fell at a weekend, surgeries were closed for longer than normal.

Out-of-hours deputising services were unable to cope and scores of sick patients took themselves off to their local accident and emergency departments.

What ministers saw as the failure of the primary care service over Christmas chimed with government plans for its reform. The Christmas crisis helped forge Tony Blair's speech in Birmingham earlier this month to a conference of GPs, nurses and managers in which he set out his vision of the NHS in the 21st century. A key aspect of that vision is instant access to medical advice when people need it.

Ministers are determined to do something about the problem of access, a key determinant of the way people perceive the NHS. Nurses, who would be contacted by telephone or via the Internet, would provide a filtering system helping patients with minor ailments to treat themselves while referring trickier cases to... how shall we describe this new style of second-line

general practitioner? Not so much a family doctor, seeing everything that comes through the door of the surgery; more a "primary care consultant", perhaps.

Here we have the medical equivalent of 24-hour banking, an image used by Tony Blair last week. For everyday problems, patients would be able to seek instant advice, 24 hours a day, from the nurse-run telephone helpline, NHS Direct, which is being rapidly rolled out across the country. Access points are to be established in post offices and libraries. Computer links (the medical cash machine) and a network of walk-in centres led by nurses would provide hands-on care. Doctors, like bank managers, would offer appointments for more serious problems.

It is, of course, far too early to tell how far this process will go. Much will depend on the response of the public and of the professional groups. But the direction of travel is clear. Stephen Thornton, director of the NHS Confederation, said the vision set out by the Prime Minister in Birmingham last week required "nothing short of a complete transformation".

It has, however, an undeniable logic to it. For more than two decades, health policy makers have

worried about using expensively trained doctors to hand out cough medicine and laxatives to the worried well. Surveys show that GPs consider many of the problems brought to them are trivial.

In the Seventies, there was talk of introducing Third-World-style barefoot doctors to the UK - medical orderlies who would sort the simple problems from the serious. What curbed these moves were warnings from the royal medical colleges that an apparently trivial symptom could hide a serious underlying disease. Only a trained doctor, taking a full history and making a proper investigation, could tell the difference. For patients to place their health in the hands of nurses risked disaster.

That view is now history. What has made the use of nurses possible as front-line practitioners is the development of computer-based protocols - lists of questions that cover all eventualities. The protocols used by NHS Direct have been adapted from America and so far the service has met with almost universal approval.

Surveys of callers in the three pilot sites have shown 97 per cent satisfaction with the advice received - even though it came only from a nurse. In some cases lives

have been saved, but more often patients who would otherwise have turned up at the surgery or accident and emergency department have been helped to deal with the problem at home, saving themselves the trip and the NHS a consultation.

Nurses are understandably enthusiastic, but GPs notably less so. They feel their territory invaded and their autonomy threatened. The BMA warns of threats to continuity of care and the doctor-patient relationship. It knows that if the role of GPs providing round-the-clock care to a defined list of patients is eroded, they could lose their coveted status as self-employed, independent contractors with the NHS.

But GPs have been living on borrowed time since 1995, when they negotiated an end to their contractual requirement to work at least some nights and weekends. Although they remain technically responsible for their patients 24 hours a day, in practice many work something close to normal office hours.

Now they are being reorganised into "primary care groups" comprising GPs, nurses, health visitors and other staff, which will ultimately control more than three-quarters of the NHS budget. These groups will serve populations of an average of 100,000, providing their primary

care and buying their hospital care within a fixed budget - the first time GPs have been cash-limited in this way. They will therefore have a financial incentive to encourage any innovation - such as the greater use of nurse-led advice and care - that improves their efficiency.

The strategy is, however, not without risk, as Professor Chris Ham, a health policy expert at the University of Birmingham, has warned. Britain has a unique system of general practice that provides care to the entire population and is admired across the world. Its strength lies in the personal relationship between patient and doctor. For many patients, who need only occasional attention, continuity of care by a familiar doctor may not matter. But for those with chronic conditions, who tend to be older, it matters more.

Bringing nurses into the medical front line is overdue and could yield real benefits for patients in terms of convenience and speed of access. But if the personal link between patient and doctor is broken, a pillar of the NHS will be lost. This will depend on whether the new nurse-led advice system is to be an additional service or merely a money-saving replacement for the traditional GP.

RIGHT OF REPLY

SHARON BREEN



A spokeswoman for the marital research charity One Plus One responds to a recent article by Robin Baker

WRITING FROM A purely biological perspective, Robin Baker ("The death of the nuclear family") ignores the evidence for the psychological and social value of shared parenting for both adults and children. In 1927 the American psychologist John Watson wrote, "Family standards have broken down. In 50 years, unless there is some change, the tribal custom of marriage will no longer exist." Yet more than 70 years later, marriage (or marriage-like) relationships remains a central element of our social structure.

True, the percentage of children who continue to live in couple families has fallen somewhat over the last 25 years, yet the fact is that four in five still do. But where is the evidence that many modern women choose to parent alone, as Mr Baker suggests?

Lone parenthood is often a transitional phase in today's family formation. Each year, 10 per cent of these lone parents move into married or cohabiting relationships. Research indicates that emotional support is vital to mental and physical well-being. While some women prefer to parent alone, overall lone mothers perceive themselves to be less happy and more stressed, and to have less access to physical and emotional resources, than women living with a partner.

True, there is great uncertainty about the role of fathers. But many researchers think that quality fathering may provide children with unique benefits. Pre-schoolers whose fathers provide 40 per cent of their care demonstrate increased empathy, fewer sexual-stereotype beliefs, and a greater richness of caring*. Most people (including many lone parents themselves) still believe that it is better for a child to live with two parents where possible.

Ebb and flow of globalisation

THOSE WHO write about globalisation usually fall into two camps - all for it, or dead set against it. Both have one feature in common: scant regard for empirical evidence.

The trouble with a tendency to see globalisation as demanding the taking of sides is that it fixes the phenomenon as a sort of force of nature. It reduces the scope for discussion to a technocratic debate about economic policies without engaging with the technicalities, because that involves grubbing about in the statistics.

Indeed, despite the overlap between right-wing politics and the pro-globalisation camp on the one hand, and the left and anti-globalisation on the other, the usual reductionist approach is frustrating for

WEDNESDAY BOOK

GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS: POLITICS, ECONOMICS AND CULTURE

BY DAVID HELD & ANTHONY MCGREW, DAVID GOLDBLATT & JONATHAN PERRATON. POLITY PRESS. £16.99

those of us who are lefist in our politics yet in favour of globalisation for its potential. Old friends accuse us of selling out, abandoning our youthful radicalism for a Thatcherite embrace of the market.

What a delight, then, to find a book that analyses globalisation as a complicated set of processes that could in principle take many forms. While the underlying causes are unstoppable,

the shape they take is not. The right natural metaphor is not globalisation as a flood that will sweep all before it, but rather as a series of tides, subject to human intervention.

Too often globalisation is seen as a purely economic phenomenon. Its cavaliers and roundheads focus on the international financial markets, trade across borders, low wages in developing countries and investment by multinationals.

Economics is important, but so is the globalisation of culture and, perhaps most interestingly, the rule of law and democratic politics. The war in Kosovo, for example, and the extradition of General Pinochet, are examples of a new uncertainty about the territories over which any given set of political norms should apply.

In other words, as this book emphasises, globalisation has altered our understanding of political community. Democracy involves making policy decisions accountable to a particular community. This accountability must be formal - reflected in votes and representation - but is also informal, embedded in economic and social involvement. However, the nature of political communities, while obviously no longer confined to the nation state, is pretty hazy.

This raises truly profound questions about the nature of democracy and citizenship. What is the proper constituency for reaching a decision on, say, the import into Europe of American beef treated with the hormone BST? On the processing of nuclear waste? On targets for reducing green-



Michelle Leonard

Oxfam KOSOVO Crisis Appeal

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Refugee camp, Republic of Macedonia, April 1999

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WEDNESDAY POEM

RECOLLECTION OF MANCHESTER

BY PAUL VERLAINE. TRANSLATED BY NORMAN R SHAPIRO

A glimpse of Salford, just a corner, was
All that I saw of Manchester, because.
Thanks to the fog and to my clubfoot gait -
And hansom cabs that circumambulate
Everywhere else, it seems! - my efforts were
Sincere but vain; and so no connoisseur
Of Manchester am I. And yet, no matter:
Priggishly though the rest of you might natter,
Decry its factories, its industries.
Telling me how much more some towns would please
My intellectual's vanities! still, sweet
The memories of that Manchester "elite."
There, in that ball - naïve, no doubt, as when
They praised Racine, taking him for Verlaine! -
As I proclaimed, for better or for worse,
My utter reverence for Shakespeare's verse.

From 'One Hundred and One Poems by Paul Verlaine: a bilingual edition', translated by Norman R Shapiro (University of Chicago Press, £19.95). © The University of Chicago. All rights reserved

Lord Killanin

MICHAEL KILLANIN, the former President of the International Olympic Committee, was talented and versatile enough to enjoy four careers in one busy lifetime: as a journalist, a soldier, a film producer and a sports administrator.

His intellect, warmth and informality in dealing with people, and international experience made him a natural diplomat. Pat Hickey, his successor as President of the Olympic Council of Ireland, referred to him as "a charming approachable man of towering intellect who helped give Ireland a remarkably high profile in the world of sport".

His presidency of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), marked a watershed in the Olympic movement's political direction. Killanin asserted his independence in the face of persistent pressure to use the games as a weapon in a series of external political conflicts. He was also far-sighted enough to realise that the old criteria of amateurism could no longer be maintained in a world of increasingly specialised and expensive training. He gave quiet approval for a relaxation in the rules to allow a more realistic level of financial support for competitors without other means of support.

Killanin's only active period as a sportsman in his own right was in boxing, rugby, swimming and rowing as a youth and in his student years.

He was born Michael Morris in 1911 into one of the ancient families of the west of Ireland, one of the "tribes" of Galway. His father was an officer in the Irish Guards who died in action in the year of his son's birth, and his mother was Australian. In 1927, while a schoolboy, he succeeded his uncle as head of the family and Baron Killanin. After Elton he went on to become President of Footbridge at Cambridge, was at Magdalen College, and was literary editor of *Cambridge Weekly*.

In 1933 he plunged into the world of journalism as a reporter on the *Daily Express* in the heyday of the Beaufort era. He then moved to the Rothermere stable, to the *Daily Mail*, as a political correspondent earning the distinction of being the sole member of the press corps to cover King George VI's Coronation while clad in the ermine-trimmed



Killanin, left, with his successor as IOC president, Juan Antonio Samaranch, in 1980

pointed President of the Olympic Council of Ireland, joining the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1952. He assumed the presidency of the body in succession to the formidable American Avery Brundage in 1972, immediately after the Munich tragedy, and held the post until 1980.

His IOC period witnessed the expulsion of the Austrian skier Karl Schranz in 1972, and the exclusion of the team from Ian Smith's Rhodesia when faced with a boycott by black

protecting the games against the joint efforts of President Jimmy Carter and Margaret Thatcher.

By the time of his retirement he was already fearful of the danger to athletics from the rising use of performance-enhancing drugs, initially in the Eastern bloc but soon a global problem. He wrote about this and other dilemmas in his autobiography, *My Olympic Years* (1983).

In his latter years he was a familiar sight at Irish annual general meetings, a genial, white-haired

genial, white-haired, dapper. Killanin represented 'auld decency' and gave Ireland a high profile in the world of sport

create a sentimental image and international affection for rural Irish life that contributed hugely to tourism in the west of Ireland.

Also at this period Killanin wrote a biography of the 18th-century portrait painter and court artist to King George I, Sir Godfrey Kneller, *Sir Godfrey Kneller and His Times* (1646-1722, 1948). He later published *The Shell Guide to Ireland* (1975) with Professor Michael Dugigan, and *My Ireland* (1987).

His role as a sports administrator began in 1950 when he was ap-

African states. The 1976 games in Montreal saw an African and Asian boycott in opposition to the participation of New Zealand, which had maintained rugby contacts with South Africa during the apartheid regime. Killanin further managed to uphold the Olympic spirit amid the fierce strains imposed by the American and British government opposition to the Moscow Games in 1980, in the aftermath of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979. It was his greatest battle, prevailing perhaps against the odds in

dapper gentleman representing patrician "auld decency" amid the claret and cigars atmosphere of the blue-chip boardrooms where he held directorships. They included the brewers Beamish and Crawford, the tobacco manufacturers Gallaher, Lombard and Uster, and Irish Shell.

In Ireland Killanin, a member of the Turf Club from 1971, also served on a variety of state bodies including a commission on thoroughbred horse breeding between 1982 and 1986. He chaired the Dublin Theatre

Péter Gosztonyi

AFTER THE 1956 Hungarian revolution several participants of the first anti-Soviet uprising in European history left Hungary and became modern historians abroad. Apart from Béla Kiraly, who found a new home in the United States, such a person was Péter Gosztonyi, who settled down in Switzerland and became one of the best historians of the Second World War and its aftermath.

Gosztonyi (in foreign publications he used the name "Gosztony") came from a middle-class Budapest family. Born in 1931, he was too young to have been involved in the war and his first choice of a profession was unconnected with history: he studied for a degree in Economics which he obtained in 1953 in Budapest, at the Academy of Economics (Közgazdasági Főiskola). As an officer in reserve he was called up for regular military service in 1956 and appointed the commander of an "auxiliary labour unit" consisting of politically unreliable young Hungarians doing military service. The unit was housed in the so-called Kilian Barracks in the centre

of Budapest; the Commander-in-Chief was a certain Colonel Pál Maéter.

The personality of Maéter made a lifelong impression on the young Gosztonyi and in a sense determined his later career, for the colonel (promoted to general during the revolution by Imre Nagy) was one of the top-ranking officers who switched sides in late October 1956 and became Minister of Defence in Nagy's last revolutionary government. After the suppression of the revolution Maéter was tried, and executed for "treason" in 1958; Gosztonyi fled Hungary to avoid imprisonment.

As he spoke German but did not want to stay in neutral Austria, Gosztonyi sought asylum in Switzerland where he studied at Zurich University, obtaining a doctorate in history there in 1963. From 1963 until his retirement he was Director of the Osteuropa-Bibliothek of the private Schweizerische Stiftung in Bern. This post allowed him to do research on modern military and political history from an independent position and from the mid-1960s onwards many publications followed in Ger-

man, Hungarian and, occasionally, in French. In fact, the first collection which he edited was in French: *Histoire du soulèvement hongrois* (1956).

It includes important source material on the history of the 1956 revolution. This was almost immediately followed by *Der ungarische Volksaufstand in Augenzeugeberichten* ("The Hungarian Popular Uprising in Eyewitness Accounts") edited by Gosztonyi, published in Düsseldorf in 1966 and republished in Munich in 1981. He also wrote a history of the 1956 uprising in Hungarian. A *magyar forradalom története* (1981), which ran into several editions, including one in Budapest in 1983. Another publication on a similar theme was the collection *Aufstände unter dem Roten Stern* ("Uprisings in the Shadow of the Red Star"), published in 1979.

Apart from the history of 1956 which remained Gosztonyi's life-long theme he published many studies about it in such Hungarian émigré publications as *Irodalmi újság* and *Új látóhatár*, the

Hungarian-Swiss historian wrote much on the history of the Second World War. He managed to interview numerous important German military participants still alive in the 1960s and 1970s, adding interesting details to already known narratives.

The results of Gosztonyi's research were published in books such as *Endkampf an der Donau 1944-1945* ("Final Struggle at the Danube", 1969), *Der Kampf um Berlin in Augenzeugeberichten* ("The Struggle for Berlin in Eyewitness Accounts", edited, 1970), *Hitlers fremde Heere* ("Hitler's Foreign Armies", 1976), *Die Rote Armee, Geschichte und Aufbau der Sowjetischen Streitkräfte seit 1917* ("The Red Army: a history and development of the Soviet armed forces since 1917", 1980) and *Stalins fremde Heere* ("Stalin's Foreign Armies", 1991).

Although Gosztonyi had published much in Hungarian before 1989, after that date he became a popular historian in Hungary, following up his *Magyarország a második világháborúban* ("Hungary in

the Second World War", volumes I-III, 1984) with several books such as *Feltámadt a tenger...* (1986), *The Sea has Arisen...* (1986), *Légi részlet, Budapest* ("Air Raid Alarm, Budapest", 1989), *Háború tan, háború!* ("It's war, it's war", 1990), *Vihar Kelet-Európá felett* ("A Storm over Eastern Europe", 1990), and a biography of Admiral Horthy, the inter-war Regent of Hungary, *A kormányzó Horthy Miklós* ("The Governor, Nicholas Horthy", 1990).

All these collections of essays and studies were characterised by a colourful style and an intense involvement in whatever their author discussed. Between 1992 and 1994 Péter Gosztonyi made several research trips to Moscow and during the past few years he was working on a longer study on Soviet military thinking in the post-war period.

GEORGE GOMORI

Péter Gosztonyi, historian and journalist; born Budapest 2 December 1931; married 1958 Yvonne Meyers (one son); died Berne, Switzerland 29 March 1999.



Narducci: "The Lizard"

Antonio Narducci

WHEN WILLIAM Boyd recently published his book on Nat Tate, a mysterious Abstract Expressionist painter, it was a disguised work of fiction and Boyd had no idea that exactly such a figure actually existed. Hardly anybody had heard of Antonio Narducci, despite his being a founding member of the Abstract Expressionist movement who had done nothing but dedicatedly made art for more than 60 years.

Whatever the reasons for his obscurity, Narducci was a highly trained professional painter who was an integral part of the most important movement of 20th-century American art but who only had one formal exhibition and subsequently refused to show his work. Narducci had the career profile of an eccentric "outsider" recluse, the difference being that he had spent years at art school, teaching and working on government commissions and both knew and was respected by the most famous artists of his era.

The culmination of all his creative labours was the PAN Art Museum and Institute PAN for Pietro Antonio Narducci in the small New Jersey town of Denville. Located on Main Street above a row of suburban shops, PAN is a warren of small rooms where Narducci lived and worked for the last 35 years; in previous decades the museum had been located just one block away. It was there that Narducci, obsessed with work, painted all day, every day, conducted optical experiments with unusual materials and gave occasional lessons to local students.

Every evening he put on a small show of his recent paintings for the townspeople, hung and spotlit in the windows of his museum, the only venue he could trust to show his work in exactly the way he wanted.

The PAN Museum now houses the entire Narducci archive - at a rough estimate over 2,000 works in a wide variety of media.

Narducci carried out his sporting responsibilities was in marked contrast to the financial scandals that recently rocked the Olympic movement. The Irish sports minister Jim McDonald said: "His status and the world-wide esteem in which he was held in Olympic circles was a source of pride for all Irish people. He played a notable part in the development of Irish horse racing, and in particular his beloved Galway race festival."

ALAN MURDOCH

Michael Morris, journalist, soldier, film producer and sports administrator; born London 30 July 1914; succeeded 1927 as Third Baron Killanin; MBE 1945; TD 1948; President, Olympic Council of Ireland 1950-53; member, International Olympic Committee 1952-59; Vice-President 1959-72; President 1972-80; married 1945 Sheila Dunlop; three sons, one daughter; died Dublin 25 April 1999.

It was the last time Narducci would show in public.

The two catalysts for his discovery of Abstract Expressionism and Modernism in general were, first, being introduced to Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* by an opera-singer girlfriend and then being led into the Cedar Tavern, an artists' watering-hole in Manhattan. Its roster of nascent stars included Jackson Pollock, Willem De Kooning, Sam Francis and Franz Kline, the latter becoming his closest friend in the group and indeed outside of it.

Narducci was known as "Tony" rather than Antonio and his Cedar Tavern nickname was "The Lizard" or "New Jersey Lizard" from the Swamps as he commuted to the bar from Denville. He was also known as "The Prince" because of his aristocratic airs.

The great love of his life was his wife, who went by the stage name of Muriel Reed, an Irish-Catholic-Russian-Jewish ballerina from a theatrical family. It was only after they married in 1943, with his best man the then curator of the Guggenheim Museum, that he discovered she could speak English. The marriage did not work out and in 1951 he was crushed by the simultaneous blow of divorce and the accidental death of his five-year-old only son.

In many ways this was a turning-point. Several of his old artist friends were already dead; the last time he had seen De Kooning the two of them sat on a New York sidewalk sharing a pastrami sandwich, then De Kooning drove back to the Hamptons and Narducci to New Jersey, neither of them ever to return to the city. Elaine de Kooning's words in a letter to Narducci's two daughters described both artists' situation: "Bill, too, is a recluse and never visits the city if he can help it. He just wants to stay in his studio and paint."

That was all Narducci wanted to do, but he also worked at various jobs, such as antique dealing. Planning to join the American air force he discovered he had signed up for American Airlines instead. He was employed there as a graphic artist and designed the company logo of an eagle which is still in use today. But Narducci slowly retreated into self-imposed exile in his museum, taking students but otherwise entirely refusing the outside world. Increasing agoraphobia and sensitivity to cold ensured he rarely left his studio and would take a taxi just to visit his dentist a few streets away.

His aesthetic experiments and steady creative evolution were for his eyes only. If his painting style had already changed from neoclassical to Ab Ex, such as the Nebula series of 1954 and cast-concrete sculpture like Apollonian, it then shifted dramatically again. Using an oscilloscope wired to a camera he kept on his fire escape pointing into the sun, Narducci began painting with light and sound waves, the first ever paintings done with the energy of the sun, abstract images captured on film and transformed into cybernetic paintings and huge sculptures such as *Cosmic Woman*, which was even wired for sound.

Narducci never ceased to try new techniques and considered that his personal breakthrough to the "next step" of purest creativity came in 1963 when he began using acrylics mixed with rainwater and ammonia, elements from the universe taken directly from nature. This series of Quintessential Aesthetics occupied him until his death and was a secret shared only with his children and occasional chosen students.

ADRIAN DANNATT

Pietro Antonio Narducci, artist; born Pietro Carmella, Italy 1 February 1915; married 1943 Muriel Reed (two daughters, and one son deceased); marriage dissolved 1951; died Denville, New Jersey 1 March 1999.

Sir James Cobban

NO ONE who knew James Cobban - headmaster of Abingdon School over two decades - is ever likely to forget him. He was a character. He spoke rapidly and at a volume appropriate for addressing a school assembly in the open air and into the wind. Many were the somnolent members of after-lunch meetings of headmasters or of the Synod jerked visibly back to wakefulness by an explosive "Mr Chairman" from Cobban.

His clarity of vision matched his energy. He nearly always knew what should be done, and colleagues found themselves swept up in the enterprise. Notes from "J.M.C.", written late in the evening and in masters' pigeon-holes before breakfast, worded "Pl. sp.", please speak or "Action pl.", had to be dealt with at once, and were.

As a result Cobban transformed Abingdon School between his arrival there in 1947 at the age of 36 and his retirement more than 23 years later. The school he took over was a small



Cobban: "Action pl."

grammar school of 230 boys, usually called Royses's after its founder and almost unknown outside the county of Berkshire. The new headmaster quickly realised the opportunity provided by the recently established Atomic Energy Re-

search Establishment at Harwell, manned by hundreds of scientists with clever sons to educate. Despite shortages of money he doubled the area owned by the school and took some pride in ensuring that he left to his successor in 1970 a school of 630 pupils, exactly 10 times the number stipulated by the founder in 1953. His achievement stands comparison with those of the giants of the profession. In many ways it was more meritorious for while they took on great schools and made them even better, he alone brought a school from obscurity to national recognition. Since the ability to delegate was the one virtue he lacked, that achievement can fairly be said to have been his alone.

Cobban knew he wanted to be a schoolmaster by the time he left Pocklington School, York, with a scholarship to Jesus College, Cambridge, where he took a first in Classics and the Gladstone Prize. After a year studying in Vienna and Rome, he taught for three years, 1933-36, at King Edward VI School, Southampton. There, he co-authored

the Latin reader *Civis Romanus* (1936) which remained continuously in print for 50 years and sold close to half a million copies.

In 1936 he moved to Dulwich College, where no fewer than 23 of his classical sixth won open awards to Oxford or Cambridge in the three years before the war and his departure for the Intelligence Corps. Having survived the Normandy beaches shortly after D-Day and thanks to a bedroom door which fell across his bed, a V2 attack in London, he went to Germany as a Lieutenant-Colonel to reorganise local government on democratic lines. He delighted in doing business with his German opposite numbers in Latin when their English and his German ran out, and he brought back a system for filing documents used by the German ministries. At Abingdon School it was widely believed to have been exclusive to the German secret service as it proved impenetrable to everyone but Cobban himself.

In daily conversation as well as in after-dinner speeches, talks and even sermons, laughter was never far away. People left his company warmed by his wit, as well as by his interest in them. Yet he had suffered two disasters which would have felled a lesser man. The loss of his two-year-old son in an accident and then in 1961, after 20 years of happy marriage, the death of his beloved wife Lorna, who had worked tirelessly beside him as the school and their family grew, were blows survived only because of his exceptionally firm faith. His was the simple, straightforward, practical Christianity of a genuinely good man.

With time in retirement to become a "full-time busybody", Cobban completed 10 years as Chairman of the Abingdon Rural District Bench and served for 15 years on the General Synod. He was knighted in 1982 on the introduction of the Assisted Places Scheme of which he was the

chief architect. For 27 years he wrote a monthly column for his diocesan magazine and until two years before his death he preached regularly in six churches near his home in Yeovil. He took pleasure in the visits of old pupils even when he could no longer walk them on the Downs, and in the company and achievements of an affectionate and talented family of four daughters.

ERIC ANDERSON

James Macdonald Cobban, headmaster and educationist; born Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire 14 September 1910; Assistant Master, King Edward VI School, Southampton 1933-36; Classics sixth-form Master, Dulwich College 1936-40; 1946-47; Headmaster, Abingdon School 1947-70; member, General Synod 1970-85; CBE 1971; knighted 1982; married 1942 Lorna Marlowe (died 1981; four daughters, and one son deceased); died Yeovil, Somerset 19 April 1999.

You ask the questions

(Such as: David Bailey, did Ronnie Kray pay you to take his wedding photographs – or did you do it as a favour?)

David Bailey, 61, was born in Leytonstone, east London. His first job was as a debt collector for a well-known boxing referee. At 17 he did a year's conscripted service in the RAF, then blagged a job with top studio photographer John French. He had no formal training in photography. Less than two years later, aged 21, he shot his first cover for *Vogue*. Bailey has been married four times and has three children. *David Bailey: Archive One, 1957-1969* by Martin Harrison is published by Thames & Hudson. An exhibition of Bailey's work during this period is showing at the Barbican, London EC2, to 27 June.

Why is it that black-and-white photography always seems somehow more "beautiful" than colour?

Gina Gregory, Hammersmith, London.
Black and white leaves it open to people's imagination. My daughter once asked me if the world was black and white when I was young.

You're identified in most people's minds as a man of the Sixties; in particular, with a time in which class barriers were being rapidly eroded. Is that how you remember it?

Roger Beuclerc, Hackney, London.
The Sixties was a time of breaking down class barriers, although I think class still exists today in some areas.

Some people think you have a deep-rooted dislike of women. Would you describe yourself as a misogynist?

Caro Gentle, Halifax.
If some people think this, they must also think I'm a masochist as I have loved more women in my life than men. Ask my women friends – they will reassure you I am always on their side.

How do you rate William Eggleston?

C Brown, Borthwick, Cambs.
I think William Eggleston's great.

How has photography as a profession changed since the Sixties? Which of today's photographers do you rate? What do you think of Juergen Teller?

Andy Henderson, Gateshead.
Photography is more about money now but then so are most things. I photographed Juergen Teller and liked him very much.

Did Ronnie Kray pay you for taking his wedding photos, or did you take them as a "favour"?



Mark Baxter, Camberwell, London.
Ronnie Kray did not pay me. It was a favour.

Do you listen to music as you work? If so, what?

Himesh Patel, Leicester.
Almost everything from Bach up, but not too much current pop.

What's your favourite memory of Terence Donovan?

Alex Spufford, Cambridge.
Ironically, his lust for life.

You have lived with some of the most beautiful women in the world. What's your secret?

Aaron Clare, Hammersmith, London.
Humour:

Who has "star quality" these days?

Elise Rebeck, Chalfont St Giles, Bucks.
Johnny Depp, Naomi Campbell, Kate Moss, Damien Hirst.

What did your wife used to think when you took pictures of her in very private moments? Or perhaps the wife of a photographer has no private moments?

Roger Jones, Oadham, Hants.
My wife is the greatest living person and I respect her more than anyone. I always try to be honest with my pictures and not hide anything. Authors do the same thing

but it is just more diffused. They can distort more than a photographer.

Is there anyone you have never photographed, and would like to?

R. Wade, London.
Castro. He's the last great icon, like Mao, Stalins, Einstein etc. I make no moral judgement. I know everything should be photographed. It helps me make sense of my existence.

During your long career, has a model ever refused to pose, or had a tantrum in your studio?

Tara Smurfit, Belfast.
No, they're only late.

Are there any models you have photographed and not had sex with?

Selina Chedcutty, London.
A few.

What's the best camera you ever had?

Ed Roman, Honiton.
Twin lens Rolleiflex and an Olympus Mu.

Catherine Deneuve first thing in the morning: nice or nasty?

John O'Sullivan, Edinburgh.
Grumpy.

Do you take better photographs of subjects that you have become personally involved with? Which model/celebrity,

NEXT WEEK

Jilly Cooper,
Followed by
Jack Straw

SEND QUESTIONS for novelist Jilly Cooper and Home Secretary Jack Straw to: You Ask the Questions, Features, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL (fax 0171-293 2182, or e-mail: yourquestions@independent.co.uk), by 12 noon on Friday 30 April.

has had the "face" of the 20th century? *Mrs SA Ledger-Lomas, Formby, Merseyside.* It is easier to work with people one knows, as did Fellini, Bergman, Ford. Jean Shrimpton is my "face" of the 20th century.

You like to make out you're sexist, yet your pictures of women, especially the elderly ones, suggest a reverence for them that betray your words. Which is the real you?

Tom Baxter, Middlesbrough.
I have never been a sexist. My mother and my aunt Dolly formed me. My great loves have been strong women. I have more women friends than men. If I have any sexist feelings they are aimed at men: I hate many men. Four men in a car talking about football is my idea of hell.

Are you a member of the family that makes that lovely drink you have at Christmas?

Debs Ross, Crickle End, London.
As nobody drinks in my family, I can't answer your question.

The faces of many of the models in the fashion pages give the impression of over-indulgence in drugs or sex, a low intelligence, or unbelievable boredom. Assuming that the models are deemed necessary, why is it that women readers are not discouraged from buying the clothes?

John M Wilson, Beverley, Yorkshire.
I think you are taking a low-intelligence view of the fashion magazines given by the tabloids. People get what they want. It's called supply and demand.

Just too good to be true

Nurses have ditched Florence Nightingale as their founding mother because she was autocratic and bullying. But what use is a shy patron? Heroes are not to be confused with real people. By John Walsh

THE NIGHTINGALE has crash-landed. One hundred and forty-eight years after Florence Nightingale arrived at Scutari Hospital in the Crimea and turned it into a pitilessly scrubbed and scrupulously hygienic place where wounded soldiers might be treated without dying from an infection picked up from one of the pillows, her reputation lies in ruins. The Lady with the Lamp is herself being extinguished.

The founding mother and patron saint of modern nursing had a metaphorical kidney-dish flung at her matronly head by nursing delegates who attended the Unison conference in Brighton on Monday.

Several speakers complained that Nightingale was an outdated and politicised icon of nursing – white, middle-class, English and Protestant – and thus inappropriate for the multi-racial, classless, pan-global profile of the nursing community in the year 2000. Anyway, they threw in, she was a real bitch to her staff and sucked up to all the doctors.

In a gesture reminiscent of a court-martialled officer having his sword broken over the CO's knee, speakers demanded that the Congress of Nurses stop holding their international Nurses' Day on 12 May, Florence's birthday. That'll teach her. They just about stopped themselves from digging her up and giving her a good kicking.

Though the nurses are a little late in "exorcising the myth" of Florence Nightingale – Lynton Strachey did a pretty thorough job of it in *Eminent Victorians*, published in 1918 – the principle behind their revisionist cries is a fascinating one. It calls into question the kind of people we feel we need to have as our leaders, figureheads, patrons, saints, icons, accredited superstars, the things we require of them, and the changing needs of the flock, the faithful, the rank and file, the worshippers. Whether or not Ms Nightingale was the real "founder of nursing" rather than, say, Elizabeth Fry, the social reformer, she undoubtedly brought a new, steely, antiseptic



Saint or celebrity? WG Grace and Florence lose out to Delia and Giolina. *Hulton Getty/PA*

rigour to patient healthcare that still, thank goodness, prevails.

She became the image of the matron who gets things done, and that is her whole point. Whether someone else "inspired" her or not, wrote more of the nursing rule book, or was nicer to her juniors is beside the point. Our heroes are embodiments of supposed virtues. They aren't to be confused with real peo-

ple. WG Grace is the central icon in cricketing history, because he scored, bowled and caught opponents out like a bearded machine sent to destroy the enemy. Is the MCC likely to call for his posthumous resignation because a recent biography revealed the Victorian slogan to be, at the human level, a curmudgeon, an overgrown schoolboy and illiberal segregationist of amateurs and professionals?

I don't think so. It's hard, likewise, to imagine Geoffrey Chaucer ever being de-throned from his position as "the father of English Literature" because the Gawain-poet got there before him, because Chaucer once held the rehabilitative positions of customs officer and knight of the shires, or because some of the ruder Canterbury Tales involve *Curry On* material about bottoms and yester-up smocks.

Both Grace and Chaucer sustain, unchallenged, in the hearts of the faithful because we instinctively respond to their largeness. We make patrons and saints out of people who bully us a little, who tell us what to do.

A century ago it was Mrs Beeton, whose *Household Management* you weren't allowed to peel a parsnip without consulting. Now that her recipes for Braised Squirrel and Elderflower Cordial are no longer required, we've let

ing generality of mankind. We felt bullied by her goodness, doomed to feel morally stunted. So we made her a saint in order to save our consciences. Look at that, we said. Marvellous, isn't she? Just not quite human...

There are those of us who sometimes feel intimidated by Mother Teresa of Calcutta – that combination of goodness and give-up-everything single-mindedness, her implied approach to the lazy, uncaring,

The nature of whatever it is they're supporting need have no special relevance to their life. When the Red Cross need a new "patron" to attract attention to their Landmine charity, following the death of the Princess of Wales, who do they call? David Ginola, the glamorous football star whose connection with war zones and legless people is confined to the last time his own team played against Arsenal.

When the World Wildlife Fund needs royal patronage, they sign up Prince Philip, a chronic and proselytising huntsman, in the teeth of all logic and sympathy.

And now that the singer Sinéad O'Connor has become a priest – she became Mother Bernadette Mary of the Latin Tridentine church last week – we can expect he'll be signed up as an "appropriate" icon-heroin, by one of the caring professions, any day now.

It's fundamentally an image thing. If only one could zip back to Scutari in 1854 and explain to Florence Nightingale that her martinet behaviour – her determination to get her own way, her courting of senior hospital medics to get what she wanted – are just doing her future reputation no favours.

THE IRRITATIONS OF MODERN LIFE

38. LAVATORY ATTENDANTS BY HANNAH BAYMAN

BUNNY GIRLS at Hugh Heffner's Playboy mansion notoriously visited the bathroom in pairs. For me, at school, lavatory cubicles were places to hide out with mates, the fashion being to squeeze in as many as possible like students in a Mini.

Into womanhood, a trip to the loo was still so much more fun if it was shared. Like the back stage of a theatre, the ladies' was a place to regroup, touch up make-up and swap notes. For the chucked, spurned or hopelessly pissed, it was somewhere to weep and wail in relative privacy, with friends on hand to dab your eyes with lavatory paper before you headed back to the fray.

But then came the advent of the lavatory attendant – and the atmosphere of camaraderie that once hung thick in the ladies' began to evaporate like old air-freshener.

At first, it was only the larger night-clubs that bothered with attendants to keep an eye on drunken loo-goers. To soften their presence they offered a selection of toiletries and, initially, it was fun to freshen your scent or rent a hairbrush mid-evening. But it has become increasingly difficult to have a pee in peace in even the most average city-centre pub.

In cramped conveniences across Britain, surly attendants now sit at the sinks, barring your way until a stall is free. Flanked by bottles of hairspray, they thrust a paper napkin into your palm as you exit the cubicle, leaving you feeling like a five-year-old who has been chided for not remembering to wash his hands. After taking the tissue, it is a brave visitor who can turn tail without leaving 50 pence on the silver tip dish.

Nothing less will do (all small change is removed at once, discouraging others from daring to be cheap). It's hard to be mean about someone who leaves the rest of us girls nowhere to balance our Archer's and lemonade, never mind the powder-puff.



Loo attendants are not always so friendly

spends their working life stuck in a lavatory. But the attendants are so often the female equivalent of hellion bouncers, harking and even grabbing at punters who step out of line. Lingerie is not allowed and ahaing cubicles is banned; the last time I tried it was actually pulled away by the arm.

Marilyn Monroe knew what the little girls' room was really for. In one film, she excused herself to pay a visit, darting back seconds later to collect her forgotten powder-puff.

"What else would a girl do in a powder room but powder her nose?" she asked her male companion with wide-eyed innocence. But these days, powdering one's nose is often less innocent. Proprietors who want to hang on to their licences are using attendants to try to stop drug-taking on the premises.

As well as policing the lavatories, some of the smartest bars have even installed cubicles without lids to leave customers nowhere to chop up lines. Problem is, it leaves the rest of us girls nowhere to balance our Archer's and lemonade, never mind the powder-puff.

A little order in your life

Cheesy models. Naff clothing. Tasteless trinkets. That's mail order catalogues for you. Think again, says **Rebecca Lowthorpe**. Upmarket mail order provides stress-free shopping for discerning shoppers whose leisure time is at a premium

Are you too busy to shop? Do you suffer from what Doctor Cary Cooper calls "time famine"? Cooper knows all about it. As professor of occupational psychology at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, he compiles Unist's annual Quality of Working Life survey, analysing the lifestyle of 5,000 UK-based managers every year. "Gone are the days when we had lots of personal disposable time," he says. "Work now intrudes into everybody's personal space." If you know how that feels, then perhaps you should consider the unthinkable and pick up the phone.

The mail order catalogue, traditionally considered as terminally naff as toilet-roll dollies, has turned into the most sophisticated, not to mention the easiest, way to go shopping.

Until recently, catalogues the size of freeze blocks would thud on to the doormat. You know, the ones with endless pages of lawnmowers, DIY tools and garden sheds sandwiched in between the "luxury" items: gold-plated trinkets, leather three-piece suites and those unforgettable mantelpiece "must-haves" - porcelain ladies carrying parasols.

Models posed with cheesy smiles: the men, one hand placed strategically on the hip, looked stiff-as-boards in dodgy shiny blazers and Sta-prest trousers; the women, equally artificial in their make-up masks, posed in foot-long thermal knickers. The old-hat catalogue had about as much visual panache as a copy of *Meatpoker's Journal*.

Mail order was for the blue-collar class, who bought expensive goods on "buy now, pay later" terms and were fleeced into the bargain by absurdly high interest rates.

It's all changed now. Ever since George Davies launched the *Next Directory* 10 years ago - a slim, stylish coffee-table book instead of one with the size and aesthetic appeal of a telephone directory - mail order has gradually moved upmarket.

Indeed, it says a lot about mail order's new-found sophistication when The Cross, a shop based in west London's affluent Notting Hill and regularly profiled in *Vogue*, starts producing a catalogue.

"It's for all those people who can't reach us in London, and for everyone whose worst nightmare is thrashing around shops every Saturday," says Sara Conroy, mail order director of The Cross.

It's a natty booklet, reminiscent of a glossy magazine supplement, which specialises in exclusive products: lounging-around clothes by hip label Dosa (orchid flip-flops, £25, silk sac bags £45), sweet childrenswear by Little Badger, and lots of home knick-knacks that look more than worthy of the pages of *Elle Decoration*.

Small businesses that offer eclectic, unusual bits and bobs, and not the sort of blanket uniformity that sometimes seems to wash over the high street, may only have one retail outlet in London, which is pretty hopeless if you live in, say, Glasgow or Birmingham.

Mail order completely changes that accessibility.

Take APC, the hip, urban clothing company based in France, which started mail order in direct response to those who couldn't reach its 15 stores worldwide. APC is well worth a look. Not only are its jeans second-to-none, and a snip at £48, but its stringent

range - the perfect shirt dress, cropped trousers, Cuban shirts, shorts, bikini, beach bags and the like - are presented in a no-fuss, modern booklet. APC's designer, Sylvie Besse, is into anything that can't be bought en masse, hence the rigorous editing of her collections, even down to the music selection. "I wanted to distribute CDs along with the clothes because huge stores are so frustrating with their endless items," she says.

It's the small, independent store philosophy - that of individual, quality goods matched with a personal service - which has steadily leaked into the mail order market, transforming it beyond recognition.

Toast, a company based in Carmarthenshire, may not have a store, but dive into its catalogue - yet another slick booklet full of desirables - and you automatically get the impression that the modern, easy pyjama shapes in muslin, cotton and silk have been designed with the individual in mind. So utterly simple that it's up to you to dress them up or down. It's also up to you whether you buy into the Toast lifestyle - heavy, crisp bed linen, Syrian tea glasses, large "bricks" of soap and even Seville orange marmalade can also wing their way to you within seven working days, courtesy of the Royal Mail.

It's not only small, quirky companies whose catalogues are a visible treat. Another tip is Space NK, the apothecary mail order catalogue with cosmetic delicacies from Kiehl's, Philosophy and Nars. Even the traditional big "books" are moving with the times. Littlewoods catalogue, now in a more palatable bite-size format, includes designer collections by John Richmond and Aly Capellino. *The Book*, slickest of the big hitters, showcases ranges by the ever-popular Joseph, Whistles, Betty Jackson, Jasper Conran and Ben de Lisi, and shoes by Robert Clergerie and Patrick Cox.

Meanwhile, most of the high street has entered the mail order market as another way to entice the time-pressurised consumer. Newest player on the block is French Connection Buy Mail, set up last year, whose tag line "Too Busy To FCUK" neatly encapsulates the changing social (indeed, lack of it) trend.

The traditional profile of the mail order customer - the lowest socio-economic group - no longer exists. Today, all of us are targeted by the home shopping market. Market research company Mintel estimates the total home-shopping market to be worth almost £5bn in 1997. Clothing and footwear accounts for nearly 60 per cent of all mail orders.

Quite simply, we have less time to do anything, let alone shop. "Nearly 40 per cent of us work at the weekend at home, mostly on computers," Cooper says. "During the week, the average family is going to work earlier and leaving later. People are burned out when they get home; the last thing

they want to do is shop in people-poluted environments, which is why more consumers are shopping from home."

So are you feeling burnt out? Pick up the phone. You might be in for a big surprise.

White organza dress (71N27, pg 3), £75, by French Connection Buy Mail 0870 606 3285; cushions, from a selection (PA827080, pg 204), £12, from The Book; white Ramesses sandals, £39.95, by Birkenstock, enquiries 0800-132 194

Photographer: Anna Stevenson
Stylist: Holly Wood
Make-up: Firyal Mooney using Christian Dior
Hair: James Mooney at Windel using Philosophy
Model: Myriam Little at Bookings

MAIL ORDER IS STRING 15 OF THE BEST

APC - 00 331 49 87 04 04. France-based APC offers a sharp collection of hip urban basics, such as a pale blue shirt dress, £67, and Cuban shirt, £30. Don't forget to check out the eclectic CD discography. The Tunisian extra-virgin olive oil or the camouflage tape - great for wrapping presents.

The Cross - 0171-221 8616. Buy into the ultimate Notting Hill lifestyle courtesy of The Cross, whose new catalogue puts *Elle Decoration* to shame. Long-sleeve linen rib tops, £95, denim espadrilles, £22. Great for presents. Like Interflora, The Cross

will send your personal message. The Book - 0800 3288 488. Slick catalogue showcasing ranges from favourite British designers - Joseph, Whistles, Betty Jackson, Jasper Conran and Ben de Lisi. Also shoes by Robert Clergerie, DKNY and Patrick Cox. Space NK - 0870 169 9999. Yummy pots and potions from the entrepreneurial Nicki Kinnaird, whose new age apothecary shop turned beauty retailing on its head in the early 1990s. Goodies from Kiehl's, Philosophy, Nars, Bumble & Bumble and Stila.

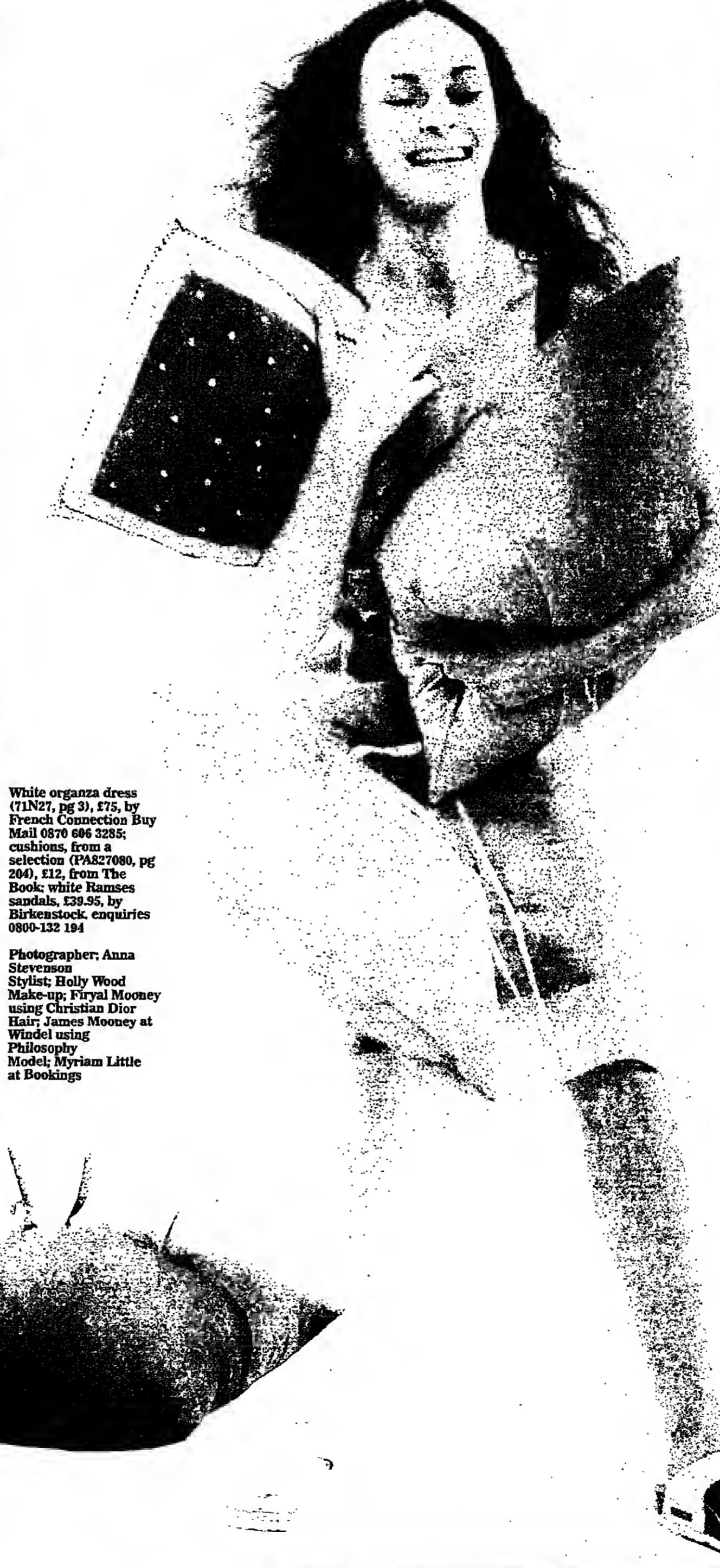
French Connection Buy Mail - 0870 606 3285. Set up last year owing to increased demand from French Connection's customers, the Buy Mail catalogue is slick and easy to follow with some great good buys. From a grey linen tailored suit, £140, to simple jersey clamdiggers, £45 and embroidered cardigans, £80. Birkenstock - 0800 132 194. Purveyor of the hippest summer sandals, Birkenstock is the number one in comfort and price, from £32.95. Littlewoods - 0345 888 222. Now in a more palatable bite-size format.

Littlewoods includes designer ranges by John Richmond and Aly Capellino. Brora - 0171-736 9944. The cashmere specialist has just launched a baby range, Baby Direct. Packages start at £24 for a pure Scottish wool baby blanket to a luxury package at £149 which includes blanket, cashmere booties, mittens and cardigan. Racing Green - 0990 788 898. Great basics, including the ever-popular Simone trouser, £49, said to fit and flatter any shape. Ghost - www.ghost.itd.uk - Available on the Internet. Ghost's classic styles -

straight-leg trousers, slim shirts, slip dresses and T-shirts - are produced every season. Available in black or white in machine-washable viscose crepe. Prices start at £70 for a camisole; long bias-cut dress, £110. La Redoute - 0500 777 777. An excellent alternative to slogging around in search of your favourite designers, such as Joseph and super-chic French designer Eric Bergere. Toast - 01558 66 68 00. The fashion editor's favourite, Toast's mini booklet is full of desirables. Clothes are easy pyjama shapes; cotton summer

nightshirts £39, linen-shift dresses £45 and cotton apron trousers £32 - they look luxurious but you wouldn't know it from the prices. Check out the soap bricks, bed linen and Syrian tea-glasses. *Joli Joli* - 0171-375 3574. Famous for their originality on the accessory front. Unusual floral or printed flip-flops £12.95, sheer shopper bags in cute colours from £14.95, along with a massive range of floral and diamante hair-clips and pretty dragonfly slides, £8.95 a pair. For a bohemian look - printed or plain headscarves, £14.95, and glamorous

chokers embroidered with sequins and coloured beads, £35. Kingshill - 01494 890 555. From Catwalk to catalogue, Joseph, Jean Muir, Paul Costelloe and Amanda Wakeley are just a few of the British-based designers showcased in Kingshill, the up-market hardback fashion book. TM Lewin - 0171-515 3360. The renowned Jermyn Street shirtmaker is the best place to stock up on crisp, summer shirts. Available plain or in gingham checks - all the colours of the rainbow, from £49-£55.



Fuchsia crochet dress (NO576380, pg 33), £90, by Karen Millen, from The Book, enquiries 0800 3288 488; silver compact (0036/0149, pg 25), £26, by Stila, from Space NK, enquiries 0870-169 9999

Log jam

OPERA
PAUL BUNYAN
SADLER'S WELLS
LONDON

MUSICALLY A miracle, dramatically a dog. "I knew nothing about opera or what is required of a librettist. In consequence, some very lovely music of Britten's went down the drain and I must now make apologies to my old friend, while wishing him a happy birthday."

Anden's words in a 50th birthday tribute to Benjamin Britten in 1963 recalled their collaboration on *Paul Bunyan*, Britten's first full-length opera some 20 years before. Britten, Pears, Auden and Isherwood were all living in the US, escaping Europe in the Thirties.

Paul Bunyan had an uncertain start: a suggested commission for a school operetta, aspiring to a Broadway production, finally being staged by Columbia University with chorus from the New York School of Cantorum. This was in May 1941.

Criticism was biting: "Mr Britten had prepared us for the plausibility and adroitness of his composing by symphonic works which have met with a measure of success in concert halls on both sides of the Atlantic," read the review in *The New York Times*.

"He is a very clever young man, who can provide something [in] any style desired by the patron. He scores with expertise and fluency. He has a melodic vein which is plausible, though one without physiognomy. He shows what could be done by a composer whose purpose was deeper set and more consistent than Mr Britten's appears to be. For this reason the respects in which he was lacking were disappointing, at times irritating."

But much of this is not incorrect. Mr Britten was indeed clever, and his ability to swing between styles – hillbilly, blues, barbershop, Puccini and his own authentic voice – astonishing. But a text so bereft of dramatic build fatally undermined the musical power of one number after the other. The work is not musically flawed; *Bunyan* provides a proving ground for the opera that was to make his name four years later – *Peter Grimes*.

Recuperating from illness in 1973, Britten turned again to *Bunyan*, making revisions. A radio performance led in 1976 to a staging at the Aldeburgh Festival. It is this version that the royal Opera so triumphantly presented two years ago and which is now in revival at Sadler's Wells. The cast is virtually the same. New to this production is Kurt Streit as "John Inkslinger" and Timothy Robinson as "Hot Biscuit Slim," both of them outstanding.

Bunyan is an ensemble piece, as dependent on its chorus as on the few main roles. Even if they were more like Russian peasants than American loggers, their singing was magnificent. Richard Hickox conducting might have allowed more swing and guitar to the three ballads of the narrator, Peter Coleman-Wright, but a worthy note.

ANNETTE MORREAU

Prophet of the absurd

A pig who goes to the moon. A soldier who tells the future through his buttocks. Victor Pelevin's satirical novels of post-Soviet Russia are bestsellers – and have made him the reluctant heir apparent to Gogol. By Jasper Rees

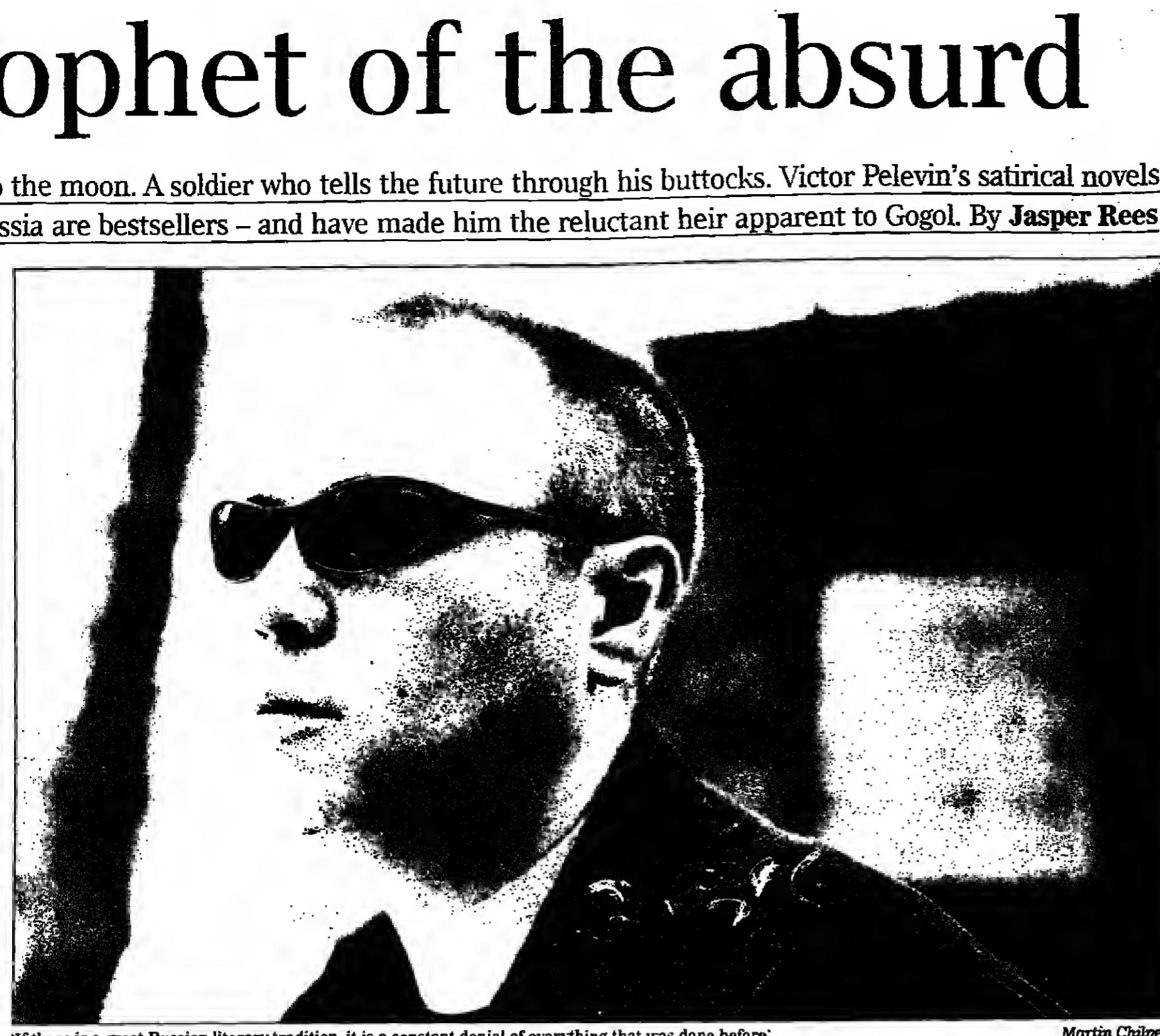
Victor Pelevin is the future of the Russian novel. His satires take the temperature of post-Soviet Russia, in all its amoral dystopian chaos. *The Clay Machine-Gun*, just translated into English, has sold more than 200,000 copies in its native territory. *Generation P*, recently published, has shifted 70,000 in less than a month, and sits proudly at the top of the bestseller list. In a reading culture where the stock-market rating of literary fiction has never been lower, he is a phenomenal blip.

In Russia, this sort of pre-eminence brings with it a practically official position, like the patriarch of the orthodox church. Pelevin ought to be apprenticed to the prophet Solzhenitsyn, making ready to take over as the conscience of the motherland, in the footsteps of Yevgeny Gorky and Tolstoy. He should also be a household face. But here he is, freshly landed in London, doing what he never does on home turf. He's giving an interview, and having his picture taken.

In *The Clay Machine-Gun*, Pelevin takes a hilarious swipe at the cult of literary celebrity. We're in the middle of nowhere in the civil war of 1919. One night, a ramshackle branch of communist irregulars are entertained by a soldier who can tell the future by talking through the cheeks of his posterior. Pyotr, Pelevin's narrator, sees in his gift a grim prophecy for the future of the arts. "Poems will only be considered interesting if it is known on the basis of sound documentary evidence that their author has two pricks, or at the very least, that he is capable of reciting them through his arse."

The novel commutes between 1919, with Russia in revolutionary turmoil, and 1991, with Russia in counter-revolutionary turmoil. Its cautionary structure invites the reader to be aware that "a culture constantly reproduces the same forms". Thus Pyotr's fears for literature at the birth of Communism remain just as current after the death of Communism. "Poetry ceased to exist," says Pelevin of the coming of the free market. "Then only pulp started to sell. First it was Western pulp, and then Russians started to produce their own pulp, which is much worse, actually." With writers now having to flog themselves in bookshops and on television, Pelevin's choice has been to withdraw entirely from domestic promotional chores and abstain from the babel of public discourse. "For me it's just more convenient. For some reason it's believed that writers are interesting as persons. I don't think that I'm an interesting person. When you are asked what you think about this and that, in 90 per cent of cases you don't think anything about it at all." He has even fallen into the habit of visiting a monastery in Korea for weeks at a time to empty his mind of that final 10 per cent. I ask him when, with his atheist upbringing, he discovered Buddhism. "Oh, I think a couple of lives ago."

Hence the sunglasses. "I am naturally shy. I hate physical attention. It's torture. I am wearing these sunglasses because it's the only way to be photographed without being photographed." It makes him look like a character from *A Life of Insects*, his novel set in a Black Sea holiday camp in which a ragbag of low-lifers – tarts, tramps, pushers – mutate back and forth into varieties of insect.



"If there is a great Russian literary tradition, it is a constant denial of everything that was done before"

In *Generation P*, all politicians are computer-generated images, "like Max Headroom, but on very sophisticated machines".

Pelevin's engagement with the apparatus and imagery of low-brow culture has infuriated the critical pharisees who zealously protect the Russian literary tradition. "This is bullshit about the great Russian tradition, because if there is any Russian literary tradition it is a constant denial of everything that was done before, and that's how it develops." Having said that, with his surreal fusion of oriental and sci-fi, there's no mistaking Pelevin's place in the absurdist pantheon alongside Gogol and Bulgakov ("a genius").

In *Onion Ra*, his first novel to gain international attention, Pelevin dissected the Party's lunatic fringe in a story about a hog whose ambition is to travel to outer space. "I re-

alised once and for ever that only weightlessness could give man genuine freedom," says the hog, and pretty soon he's drafted by the Soviet space programme to man an "unnanned" one-way mission to the dark side of the moon. It's a marvelous fable about the lies disseminated in the name of ideology, and the involuntary heroes that ideologies thrust upon innocents.

As the son of a military officer, Pelevin grew up among defenders of the faith, although he says "no one believed in the ideology". His father, who died this February, was a colonel in air defence, and Pelevin spent the summers of his childhood on a Moscow army base. "I really loved the place actually. It was like a big playground full of soldiers." Though you could mistake him for a squadie, with his cropped hair and combat trousers, he didn't love

army life so much that he wanted to join up himself. To avoid military service, he enlisted at the age of 15 at the Moscow Institute of Power Engineering, and with the resultant qualifications found himself working on a project to protect MiG fighters from tropical insects. "We spent two or three months in so-called military camps playing cards and smoking dope. Sometimes they took you to an airfield where you would relax by lying on the wing or some fighter I guess I killed a couple of insects on summer lying on the wing."

He took up writing in his mid-twenties – he is now 36 – because "I didn't want to go to work every morning. Literature is the kind of art where you're left absolutely on your own. If you grew up in a communist society it's normal that you get so many psychic traumas that it makes it hard for you to communicate

with other people. You have a lot of complexes. You are crippled by the time you are grown up. Writing helps you to cure yourself. It's like those long-distance runners who can't stop running because their bodies start to produce a drug. At first it's an effort and then it provides you with the shortest access to endorphins. You get high, start to laugh, and become very friendly to other people."

The Clay Machine-Gun was published three years ago, and yet there's no overlooking its relevance to the latest imbroglio in Yugoslavia, although Pelevin wouldn't dream of saying this back home. "The Serbs talk about this great Slavic brotherhood every time they are in trouble. In 1914 Russia got involved in war because of some killing in Sarajevo. After that Russia had a revolution and 70 years of communism. It was the direct result. I hope that the people in Russia are not total idiots. I hope that they remember some lessons. There's something really terrible about war in Europe – it sounds strange. But war has its own engine. You never know what will happen next." Spoken like a true Russian prophet.

"*The Clay Machine-Gun*", Faber and Faber and Harcourt, £9.99. Victor Pelevin is appearing at the Brighton Festival on Saturday at 8pm in Pavilion Theatre, New Road

Martin Chilvers

THE OPENING CHAPTER OF 'THE CLAY MACHINE-GUN'

TVRSKOI BOULEVARD was exactly as it had been when I last saw it, two years before. Once again it was February, with snowdrifts everywhere and that peculiar gloom which somehow manages to infiltrate the very daylight. The same old women were perched motionless on the

benches; above them, beyond the black latticework of the branches, there was the same grey sky like an old, worn mattress drooping down towards the earth under the weight of a sleeping god.

Some things, however, were different. This winter, the

avenues were scoured by a blizzard straight off the steppes, and I should not have been in the least surprised to have come face to face with a pair of wolves during the course of my walk. The bronze Pushkin seemed a little sadder than usual – no doubt because his breast was

covered with a red aroo bearing the inscription "Long Live The First Anniversary Of The Revolution". I felt not the slightest inclination for ironical comment on the fact that the tears were intended for an event which could not by definition last longer than a single day...

ENO

"Ms Joshua seduced the audience with Semele's irresistibly sexy, egotistical erias," *Wall Street Journal*

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Semele

Handel



No pause, no claws

HAROLD PINTER'S 1958 debut *The Birthday Party* is high up in the National Theatre survey of the century's great plays. Anyone coming cold to it at latest revival, however, would be hard put to see why.

Two mysterious visitors, Goldberg and McCann, turn up at Meg and Petey's boarding house with malice aforethought, and terrorise Stanley, the paying guest. Yet, instead of pursuing a thriller format with everything neatly explained, Pinter leaves us in the dark as to the reasons for the malevolence and instead builds terrifyingly tense drama from the speech patterns and behaviour of his characters, tying a noose around the victim's neck, and that of the audience.

At least, that's the theory. But it's extremely difficult to pull off, and these actors have been cast astutely. Barry Jackson is a nicely benign Petey, but Prunella Scales plays Meg from a distance. She seems to have wandered in from Orton's *Entertaining Mr Sloane*, doing "comedy acting" with an accent borrowed from Irene Handl.

Steven Pacey as Stanley also stymies himself by using a nasal style that puts both us and him at one remove from his character. Part of the problem is the casting. He looks strong

THEATRE

THE BIRTHDAY PARTY

PICCADILLY THEATRE
LONDON



"The Birthday Party": disappointing revival
Gérard Lewis

enough to knock his interrogators flat, which unbalances the critical power play.

Timothy Pasey as Stanley also appears merely baffling. At the opening of the second act, McCann sits methodically tearing a page of newspaper into strips. In a strong production, the effect is chilling. The silent

scene may be abstract, but the feeling should engulf you like dry ice: something very, very nasty is going on. Here also, the moment goes for nothing.

It's as if the director, Joe Harston, has decided to banish the famous "pauses". Overly reverent, underpowered productions can make Pinter seem horribly portentous, but his pauses are there for solid, dramatic reasons. We should be glued to the dialogue's power of suggestion in the poetically constructed rhythms, but with Harston's fleet-but-flat approach this three-act play whistles along without an interval in 100 minutes. The surface text is played so literally, so fast, that the actors race through the interrogation scenes as if doing a memory-testing speed-run.

Consequently, the all-important subtext remains dormant and we remain fatally disengaged. Scales manages a nice line in comic non sequiturs but the humour should leaven the play's potentially thrilling undercurrents, which are rarely disturbed by Harston's less than commanding grip.

DAVID BENEDICT

A version of this review appeared in later editions of yesterday's newspaper

In your own time, Mr Pogorelich

CLASSICAL

IVO POGORELICH: BENEFIT RECITAL

ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

LONDON

IVO POGORELICH has always been a controversial pianist

but, to judge from his latest CD of Chopin's four Scherzos and the benefit recital he gave in aid of the historic sites of Yugoslavia, his eccentricity follows a certain pattern.

His all-Chopin pro-

gramme on Monday looked,

on paper, your average two

hours, without encores, it last-

ed at least 20 minutes longer.

One of Pogorelich's several

gifts is a wonderfully focused

sound. Launching the C minor

Polonaise – if launching is

the right word for the leisurely

wayward tempo he adopted –

his left hand octaves sounded

huge, as if he were pushing

open the great bronze gates of

a structure too immense to

size up. Never mind that

Chopin's score suggests some-

thing initially more under-

standing – yet with more impetus, this

was a strong, strange alter-

native view. The F sharp minor

Polonaise, Op 44, began more

conventionally, proud and

pompous, though with the left

hand overbalancing the right,

until in the delicate contrasting

section, Pogorelich's relish for

the most refined and delicate

sonorities threatened to bring

progress to a halt. The piece

seemed to drag on for ever.

What might he do with the

Funeral March Sonata? The

opening motto was, again,

enormously enlarged, though

Pogorelich didn't include it in

the repeat. The second subject

was slowed down a lot, too,

and rather heavy-handed, while

the central development was dis-

torted by having some bars

virtually doubled in length. No

wonder the whole movement

seemed disjointed. The Scherzo – a real killer – went well,

though again Pogorelich's left

hand was too loud for his right.

In the Trio section he made



Log
jam
OPERA
BY RICHARD O'BRIEN

There's no place like home

David Greig isn't just a 'Scottish' writer: his plays are produced across Europe. What does being a Scot mean to him? By Paul Taylor

Sean Connery has touched down north of the Border and so have I. Global screen superstar, Scotland's biggest export next to whisky, and her most prominent tax exile, ranged on one side of the case: a humble English theatre critic on the other. Surely no connection. Ah, but wait a moment. Connery is here - using up a few of the precious days allowed him per year by the Inland Revenue - to deliver what turns out to be an emotional, self-scripted election rally speech in support of the Scottish National Party. I, meanwhile, am here to talk about the cultural *Zeitgeist* with David Greig, the playwright who is, by general consent, the most gifted and prolific of the vibrant new wave of Scottish dramatists that includes David Knives in *Hens Harrower* and Stephen Possing *Places* Greenhorn.

Now it just so happens that Connery was the comically dominating offstage presence in Greig's *Caledonia Dreaming*, a 1997 play that put pre-devolutionary Scotland on the psychiatrist's couch by following a collection of characters as they chased around the place on a summer night when Connery is rumoured to be in residence at Edinburgh's top hotel. Cut to April 1999, and an amused Greig admits that Connery could no longer function in that play as a unifying, fantasy-figured icon of Scottish success.

The local press have turned hostile towards him (sniping at such anomalies as a great Patriot accepting an officer to promote Suntory Crest, a Japanese blended whisky), and the Kosovo crisis could not have come at a worse time, electorally speaking, for a Nationalist party. So who would he replace him with, if the play were given a revival? Greig thinks for a moment and replies, with typically playful humour, "Irvine Welsh".

Chatting to this softly-spoken young playwright, in the lounge bar of an anonymous hotel in a Glasgow railway complex, is a bit like conducting an interview with Samuel Beckett in a row of dustbins. Transit areas, borders, stop-off points that are neither one place nor the other, and cultural no-mans-lands, are Greig's principal imaginative terrain.

This is the case in a text-based play like *Europe* (1994), which projects his preoccupation with Scottishness on to a redundant railway station in a decaying, unnamed central European town that has, historically, suffered all the indignities and identity crises of being a mere border between rival powers.

It's also true of the pieces he makes using the collaborative working methods of his own company, Suspect Culture, where text tends to be the last element added to an experience that lays as much emphasis on the eloquence of stylised gesture and musical form. *Airport* for example, was a droll and touching search for the "Real Scotland or the real anywhere" in the vast, limbo-like transport lounge that is the modern airport and employed a mixed nation-

ality cast. Cultural cusps are to Greig what thistles were to Hugh MacDiarmid, so, at this watershed in Scotland's identity, he's just the right man to quip about how his generation of Scottish dramatists relate to their country's dramatic heritage, respond to the present and view their future.

One of the seven new pieces by Greig that will be premiered in 1999 is the haunting and snappily titled *The Cosmonaut's last message to the woman he once loved in the former Soviet Union*, which is just about to open in a Paines Plough touring production directed by Vicki Featherstone. Taking place both in outer space and invarious European locations, it contains a scene in which a woman fantasises about returning to the Isle of Skye and learning Gaelic: "The children can go to school on the Internet," she remarks, blissfully unaware of any contradiction. The opposing forces (nationalism and globalisation) exemplified in her desires are reflected too, in Greig's response when I ask him which flag flies over his creative sub-conscious. He remarks that nationalism is both "irrational and very important". That's the paradox. "The more technology makes your nationality a meaningless thing, the more likely you are to cling to it. I effectively have more in common with a New York playwright on a similar income who watched the same television programmes in the 1970s, than I do with a fisherman in Sutherland." But, as globalisation goes into overdrive, "a simple gathering in a room is something people will increasingly want".

Which is where theatre comes into its own. But is this tantamount to suggesting that theatre and nationalism are parallel phenomena: both declared out-moded yet being rediscovered as at once precious and dangerous? The latest vintage of Scottish playwright is distinguished by its looking to Europe both for audiences and for aesthetic influences. So would it not be slightly rum for such dramatists to lay any great stress on that parallel?

Philip Howard, the highly astute and, ironically, wholly English artistic director of Edinburgh's Traverse - a theatre where, during his tenure, the proportion of the repertoire devoted to Scottish playwrights has gone up from 30 to 50 per cent - remarks that a traditional source of vigour in the country's theatre and of differentiation from its English counterpart is that the dominant idiom has been working-class.

Greig, of whose work Howard is a key interpreter, is aware that his plays are regarded in certain quarters as the symptom of a creeping middle-class tendency and lack of that customary red-bloodedness. Certainly, it is hard to imagine Chris Hannan, a fine playwright from the preceding generation, composing a piece about a bunch of twenty-something urban Scots that involved a score for onstage string quartet which often deliberately drowned the dialogue, a Cubist arrangement of bodies, and lots of ritualised miming - as was the case with *Timeless*. But Greig good-humouredly accepts that his work has been working-class.

It's also true of the pieces he makes using the collaborative working methods of his own company, Suspect Culture, where text tends to be the last element added to an experience that lays as much emphasis on the eloquence of stylised gesture and musical form. *Airport* for example, was a droll and touching search for the "Real Scotland or the real anywhere" in the vast, limbo-like transport lounge that is the modern airport and employed a mixed nation-



Space oddity: Andy Smart in 'The Cosmonaut's last message to the woman he once loved in the former Soviet Union'

mouredly straddles the contradictions and ironies of being both "the most important playwright to have emerged north of the border in years" (*The Scotsman*) and an unrepentantly arty internationalist.

One of these ironies relates to England. At a recent conference in Copenhagen about the creation of playwrighting cultures, I heard Greig's gifted friend and fellow Glasgow-based dramatist, Stephen Greenhorn, vehemently deny that he was a British writer and effectively say that, in terms of his priorities, London could go fuck itself. Greig is more in two minds ("I don't think of London as the capital of Great Britain but as the capital of theatre") and points out that one of the ways

in which theatre remains nationalist is in its funding. Understandably, he continues, neither the Scottish Arts Council nor the London Arts Board are prepared to finance the export of subsidised work to the English metropolis. This means that *Europe* has been seen in Europe but not in London, with the added irony that Europeans tend to take the title literally. "If I had my time again, I would call the play *Scotland*. That border town could just as easily be Motherwell." The catch 22 is that a playwright's native stock north of the border rises considerably after appearances south of that line.

A source of money that bypasses these problems is the Edinburgh Festival, which has, for this year,

commissioned Greig and Luisa Cunill - a writer from the analogous polity of Catalonia - to compose pieces about emergent nations. Greig's response to the brief is highly revealing of his playfulness and capacity for lateral thinking. At the centre of *The Speculator* is John Law, the 18th-century Scot who invented paper currency and the notion of money as pure function. For 500 days in 1719, thanks to a financial scheme that eventually collapsed, Law ruled France more absolutely than any absolute monarch, and the play floats the contention that if the staid burghers of Edinburgh hadn't earlier drummed the father of paper inflation out of the country, it could have amassed

enough wealth to avoid the 1707 Act of Union. But *The Speculator* is not patriotic historical pageant; from Greig's description, it sounds more like an anachronism-flecked, post-modern meditation of the unbearable lightness of money.

As for the twining with Catalonia, he thinks it works very much to Scotland's benefit. "I don't imagine there are hundreds of Catalans milling around, saying how like Glasgow Barcelona is," he quips. I have no doubt that this self-deprecating humour is partly sincere; but it also, to my ear, sounds like an instance of the more relaxed cultural confidence that has generated this remarkable flowering of new Scottish dramaturgy.

WHAT THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS SAY



David Greig, dramatist
"Nationalism is both irrational and very important. That's the paradox. The more technology makes nationality a meaningless thing, the more likely you are to cling to it. I effectively have more in common with a New York playwright on a similar income who watched the same television programmes in the 1970s, than I do with a fisherman in Sutherland."



David Maclean, Wild Cat Theatre Group
"There are many reasons to feel optimistic about devolution. It seems that devolution has come from a sense of cultural identity rather than political need. The driving force behind the change has been that Scotland has cultural differences and a sense of cultural traditions that needs to be strengthened."



Charles Kennedy, Scottish Liberal Democrats
"We are proud of our unique culture and heritage. Scottish Liberal Democrats believe that the Parliament will provide a stimulus for the arts, and for the development of a national cultural strategy. Not only do the arts enrich the lives of Scottish people, they provide an important source of job creation."

ROBERT HANKS ON TV

An indiscreet splash of colour and you were labelled a cad, spiv or poof

PAGE 16

A TRUE THEATRICAL SENSATION

Suddenly, like Summer

TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

"SHEILA GISH IS IN TREMENDOUS FORM"

"SEAN MATHIAS DIRECTS WITH AN UNERRING SENSE OF STYLE, CONTENT AND FEELING"

RACHEL WEISZ RISES HAUNTINGLY TO THE OCCASION"

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ON THE FRINGE

ESCAPE FROM PTERODACTYL ISLAND THE PLEASANCE ■ GATE 45
YOUNG VIC STUDIO ■ **THE YIDDISH QUEEN LEAR** SOUTHWARK PLAYHOUSE

NATO HAS not yet incorporated the exploding coconut into its armoury, but in *Escape from Pterodactyl Island* this device proves effective against both barbarian and dinosaurs. Hardly surprising in a luminously absurd production that mixes eugenics, an ear drum-bursting score, a Nietzschean professor called Dr Devo, tongue-in-cheek choreography, Victorian prudery and fetishistic lyrics.

Paul Thornley, as young Professor Worthington, is comically convincing as an English gentleman of the Wodehouse school, intent on carrying out DIY imperialism on the natives. The essence of his performance lies in a revved-up plummy accent and innocently raised eyebrows - both vital for escaping the Jurassic island where evil Dr Devo plans to create a reptilian super-race. Louisa McCarthy brings a bilarious insouciance to her role as Eve, the babe in a fur bikini who wins the Prof's affections, while Sophie-Louise Dann's choreography equips all with *Rocky Horror*-inspired steps that are funny enough to get laughs when the script fails.

Philip George's production

is more cheesy than an aged bottle of milk - and some of the jokes are just as mouldy. When a mutant pterodactyl resulting from a Darwinian experiment tries to seduce Worthington with the lyrics "Feel the urge! Make the natural selection", you don't know whether to groan or die, but the balance is favourably tipped by Michael Jeffrey's score, which fills the audience with the kind of enthusiasm that crowd psychologists ought to investigate.

Alison Andrews' experimental *Gate 45* also deals with escape, but this is a meditative piece in which two women muse on the experiences they could have if it were possible to evade the constraints of time. Alison Ashton's set design demands to be the star, featuring an airport luggage carousel that becomes a medium for exhibiting objects symbolising the memories, fantasies and journeys that the women create in their conversation.

Gate 45 comes across as an insipid exploration of material it doesn't quite know how to cope with. Like a partying social climber, it frantically drops names to feign a credibility it doesn't possess. From a

conversation with Freud, we move on through a sequence of words and images embracing Hiroshima, Gandhi, Vietnam, and Mickey Mouse. Strip it of its pretensions, and you are left with the women's dull musings. If you ever got the chance to time-travel, you wouldn't make this one of your stops.

Nor indeed would you stop off at Julia Pascal's *The Yiddish Queen Lear*. Pascal's decision to link the 20th-century persecution of the Jews with *King Lear* could have been an exciting and potent device - both raise the emotive issues of land possession, inheritance and exile - but this badly structured production ultimately comes across as a weak postscript to Shakespeare's masterpiece. The play occasionally comes alive when the cast performs Yiddish music hall - but when the star of the show is the pianist, you know that something is seriously wrong.

RACHEL HALLIBURTON

Escape from Pterodactyl Island (0171-601 1800) to 9 May; *Gate 45* (0171-928 6363) to 1 May; *The Yiddish Queen Lear* (0171-620 3494) to 22 May

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I WORK FOR...

POLLY MARKANDYA IS PA TO ANNE-MARIE HUBY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIÈRES

From the age of 16, I had wanted to work for Médecins Sans Frontières. It was, and still is, an organisation that reflects the things I find important. MSF members always speak passionately, have guts and go to places others wouldn't, standing up for some of the most unlucky people on the planet. Whenever there is a big disaster there's always an MSF doctor at the scene.

I studied modern history, which was all about wars, disasters and population movement, so it wasn't a great leap to the field I am now working in.

After I graduated, I worked as an intern in Moscow for an organisation called Winrock, helping farmers through the transition from collective farming to private smallholdings. On my return, I wrote to 20 charities but got no positive replies, so I got a job with Marks & Spencer. Luckily I was saved from a lifetime of retail when MSF offered me a part-time voluntary job which I combined with two other jobs, until six months later I was given the full-time paid job of PA.

Anne-Marie and I shared a desk for several years, which was invaluable because I learnt so much from watching her and listening to her - her gut feeling is usually right and her advice excellent. Like many of my colleagues, she's a polyglot which makes me sick with jealousy - I would like to say I correct her English from time to time, but instead it's usually her correcting mine. She's supportive of me and pushed me to take on responsibilities and build my confidence.

Initially, I was doing anything from setting up board meetings to fielding phone calls. Some calls are vital, others well-meaning if a little bizarre, such as the widow who rang because her husband had left his false leg to MSF in his will.

As time went on, I began taking more media enquiries and when Anne-Marie asked me what I most liked about my job at my annual review, I told her it was the press work - so she made me press assistant. I still work closely with her, for example when she was on Question Time and needed to be prepared. I spent an afternoon researching topics such as genetically modified foods and education.

Since we are an international organisation, we need to work closely with colleagues around the world, most of whom I've never



Polly Markandya: 'Constantly questioning what humanitarian action is keeps us close to our principles'

Knives Lathigra

met but I really like the relationships we build.

The situation in Kosovo is dominating everything; however there are 20 other countries that receive our help. We are concerned about the failure to find a political settlement to the war in Sudan, for example, since there's a likelihood of it leading to another famine.

It's my job to brief volunteers beforehand and explain what their responsibility is vis-à-vis protecting the rights of the patient. A quarter of the countries we work in are within areas of conflict, and we feel strongly that it is the responsibility of each individual to provide a degree of protection for the patients as well as drawing their plight to the attention of the general public. We also believe that to protect people on the ground means being there, usually before the TV cameras and for some time after they have left.

The International Red Cross and MSF were the two organisations that

stayed longest in Pristina, which was partly due to the dedication of the people in the field. But as the bombing became more intensive and law and order began to break down - a precursor to the "ethnic cleansing" - it became impossible to work amid anti-Western mob violence

lived my life and don't mind dying, but what about my six-year-old?

The calls from Sierra Leone were particularly bad as colleagues found adults and children who had been deliberately mutilated as part of a terror campaign. One feels sickened and horrified but at the same time

'MSF members have guts and go to places others wouldn't, standing up for some of the most unlucky people on the planet'

As the British communicator in England, I was on the phone to our volunteers a lot, and the calls were awful. Tim Boucher, our head of mission, was very worried about the local personnel. He reported how fearful the Albanians were.

One Kosovar member of staff, for example, told him: "I'm 45 and I've

driven to work harder. The best motivating factor is when you are asked to spread the news to the wider world.

I love and believe in my work but I make a real effort not to bring it home with me - none of my friends works in the aid sector, which helps prevent me becoming totally

obsessed. You need to keep the perspective fresh, otherwise there is a danger of you becoming insensitive to the level of what is acceptable and what is not.

No one working here clock-watches; everyone puts in the hours, because they know the necessity of it. It is a very friendly office, we all have lunch together and there's a spirit of task-sharing. We do have an administrator, but it's the job of everyone here to do their own typing and picks up the phone - we don't have voice mail. And when we had the office extended, everyone came in at the weekend to help out with the painting.

We are all listened to here because each person has a different perspective, which ensures that there's a debate - and that's important because constantly questioning what humanitarian action is keeps us close to our principles.

INTERVIEW BY
KATIE SAMPSON

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How to talk your way out of a job as a secretary...

Will a regional accent hinder your career progress? By Kate Hilpern

LAST YEAR, you may remember

Employers may think it

doesn't matter how you sound

if you're PA to a manager, but

if being PA to the chief executive

is a different matter. They think

'We've spent all this money on

corporate logos and post of-

fices, so we're not going to ruin

our image now.' It can make it

almost impossible to get a fair

chance.

For secretarial staff, who

are expected to reflect the

image of the company for which

they work, the implications

are enormous - a fact that

Jean Briscoe knows all too

well. Five years ago, she claims,

she was sacked from her tele-

phone receptionist job because

her boss didn't like her heavy

Birmingham accent. Brum-

miles, after all, are all too often

regarded as unintelligent and

working-class. Similarly, Louise

Yates, the wife of the footballer

Steve Yates, claims she was

forced to quit three jobs be-

cause of constant ribbing of her

West Country accent. Some

colleagues called her a "yokel"

while others even slowed down

or spoke more loudly when

talking to her. Research by the

Institute of Personnel and De-

velopment - based on a survey

of 30 recruitment consultants

finds that BBC English still re-

mains the accent that opens the

most doors. One consultant,

Rachel Asquith, explains: "The

person answering the phone or

greeting clients is often the

first point of contact. Just as

employers wouldn't employ

someone to do that who doesn't

dress how they like, most won't

consider someone who doesn't

sound how they like. Unfortu-

nately, often means people with



THE INFORMATION DAILY

CINEMA · THEATRE · EXHIBITIONS · MUSIC · DANCE · LITERATURE · COMEDY · EVENTS · TV & RADIO

NEW FILMS

BESIEGED (PG, 92 mins)

Director: Bernardo Bertolucci
Starring: Thandie Newton, David Thewlis
In a startling volte-face from the epics of recent years, Bertolucci's new film, *Besieged*, confines itself principally to a cavernous Roman townhouse. It charts the festering master-servant relationship between Thewlis's highly strung concert pianist and Newton's refugee housemaid, all torrid glances and stammering moments of communication. At once small-scale and ripely melodramatic, this is a mixed bag, but with a beautifully understated finale. *West End: Clapham Picture House, Curzon Mayfair. Repertory: The Pulman Everyman*

THE BRYLCREEM BOYS (15, 106 mins)

Director: Terence Ryan
Starring: Gabriel Byrne, Bill Campbell
Neutral Ireland during WWI. Captured German and Allied soldiers are shepherded into the same cells. Tensions erupt: stereotypes are paraded; uneasy allegiances forged. Ryan's film may have worked well on stage. Here, it looks flat and horribly schematic. *West End: ABC Panton Street*

DANCE WITH ME (PG, 126 mins)

Director: Randa Haines
Starring: Chayanne, Vanessa L Williams
Building to a predictable finale at the World Dance Championships, the clanking *Dance With Me* has its Cuban emigre hero (Chayanne) alighting in the US of A to hunt for his long-lost son (Kris Kristofferson), while still finding time to romance Vanessa L Williams's ballroom beauty. *West End: Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas*

8MM (18, 123 mins)

Director: Joel Schumacher
Starring: Nicolas Cage, Joaquin Phoenix
The dead hand of Hollywood politics is evident all over this would-be provocative trip through LA's porn hinterland. Nicolas Cage copes well as the private eye hired to validate what looks to be souffle-movie footage, but such scuzz requires careful handling, and Schumacher lets it take over. Frustratingly, 8mm winds up contaminated by that which it is nominally investigating. *West End: Clapham*

Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

MESSAGE IN A BOTTLE (12, 132 mins)

Director: Luis Mandoki
Starring: Kevin Costner, Robin Wright Penn
Kevin Costner's South Carolina boat-builder writes a love letter to his dead misfit. Letter goes into bottle; bottle into sea. Lonesome lady (Robin Wright Penn) finds bottle. Complete the plot in less than 50 words. We all know where this one's headed, don't we? True, hurt, pain of the past, a dash of redemption, and that's it, you're done. *West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Notting Hill, Curzon, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas*

THE MISADVENTURES OF MARGARET (15, 100 mins)

Director: Brian Skeet
Starring: Parker Posey, Jeremy Northam

Parker Posey is Margaret, a kind of Pee-wee PIstol of romantic fiction. She touches down in Paris, wedges Jeremy Northam's dippy Englishman, and writes an effervescent book or two in New York. Brian Skeet's film follows a screwball rhythm, over-egging the farce, tossing in bodice-ripping dramatisations, and crucially, leaving the characters under-drawn. The normally luminous Posey displays a series of self-conscious tics and twitches. *West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue*

SIDE STREETS (15, 131 mins)

Director: Tony Gerber
Starring: Shashi Kapoor, Valeria Golino
A kind of *Short Cuts* without the cut, *Side Streets* rustles up a quintet of stories from New York. Cue lively vignettes and proficient playing from a multi-national cast. The whole tapestry of New York life is dry-cleaned, lightly embroidered and unravelled for your pleasure. *West End: Plaza, Local: Edmonton Lee Valley UCI 12*

Xan Brooks

GENERAL RELEASE

AMERICAN HISTORY X (18, 119 mins)

A liberal essay on right-wing fanaticism, *American History X* nonetheless indulges in some dubious Nazi chic. What binds it together is a genuine tour-de-force from Oscar-nominated Edward Norton. *West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Warner West End. And local cinemas*

ARLINGTON ROAD (15, 117 mins)

Mark Pellingor's intriguingly staged paranoia thriller sees Jeff Bridges' college prof becoming suspicious about the antics of his outwardly respectable neighbour (Tim Robbins). *West End: Warner Village West End*

AN AUTUMN TALE (U, 111 mins)

The final part of Eric Rohmer's *Tales of the Four Seasons* is airy elegiac and as warm as sunshine. Magali (Beatrice Romand) – middle-aged and single – gets ushered through all manner of boops as her friends try to set her up with eligible men. *West End: Curzon Mayfair, Renoir. Repertory: Watermans Arts Centre*

BEDROOMS AND HALLWAYS (15, 96 mins)

In this latest offering from the *This Life* school of British film-making, Kevin McKidd's giddy Londoner runs the romantic gauntlet in the run-up to his 30th birthday. *West End: ABC Piccadilly*

BLAST FROM THE PAST (12, 111 mins)

Hugh Wilson's workmanlike Cold War satire has Brendan Fraser's last American man (called Adam, natch) emerging from the nuclear bunker that his parents holed up in during the Cuban Missile Crisis. With Alicia Silverstone. *West End: Warner Village West End*

A CIVIL ACTION (15, 115 mins)

John Travolta's ambulance-chasing lawyer takes a shot at redemption in this complex and absorbing courtroom saga which nonetheless raises inevitable comparisons with Sidney Lumet's *The Verdict*. *West End: Empire Leicester Square, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero. Warner Village West End. And local cinemas*

THE FACULTY (15, 104 mins)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above. *West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas*

TESTAMENT (THE CELEBRATION) (15, 106 mins)

Filmed using natural light, natural sound and a hand-held camera, *Testament* begins in a rush of pure, unfettered drama. The film's rawness is largely confined, but by the end you're too hooked to care. *West End: ABC Panton St, Odeon Swiss Cottage. Repertory: Watermans Arts Centre*

GODS AND MONSTERS (15, 105 mins)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above. *West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Metro, Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Fulham Road. And local cinemas*

HAPPINESS (18, 134 mins)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above. *West End: Clapham Picture House, Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Haymarket*

HIGH ART (18, 102 mins)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above. *West End: Curzon Soho, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema*

AN IDEAL HUSBAND (PG, 100 mins)

Oliver Parker's film is a proficient but mechanical overhaul of Oscar Wilde's satire of middle-class hypocrisies. The sharp dialogue is rather blurred by the snappy editing but bright playing from the cast (Rupert Everett, Cate Blanchett) helps paper over the cracks. *West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Chelsea Cinema, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon West End, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, The Tricycle Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road. And local cinemas*

PAYBACK (18, 110 mins)

Revisiting the same source novel that inspired John Boorman's *Point Blank*, this rumbling revenge thriller sends its anti-hero (Mel Gibson) on a mission to get his money and get even. *West End: Odeon Marble Arch, Virgin Trocadero, Virgin Fulham Road. Warner Village West End. And local cinemas*

PLUNKETT AND MACLEAN (15, 100 mins)

Robert Carlyle, Joely Miller and Liv Tyler star in this 18th-century romp that offers noise and pop-promo visuals rather than character development. *West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Mezzanine, Ritzy Cinema. And local cinemas*

THE RED VIOLIN (15, 132 mins)

François Girard's daisy chain of historical vignettes follows the course of a cursed violin down the centuries. Unfortunately, Girard's bitty narrative leaves the film labouring in third gear throughout. *West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Ritzy Cinema. And local cinemas*

RETURN TO PARADISE (15, 109 mins)

In Joseph Ruben's fact-based saga, two graduate travellers return to the scene of their crimes when a buddy is busted for drugs possession in Malaysia. A classic "what would you do?" morality play, the film still hungles its ready-made drama. *West End: Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas*

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE (15, 123 mins)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above. *West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road. And local cinemas*

SLAM (15, 99 mins)

Even if slam-poetry's clanking rhymes make you want to "slam" the perpetrator's head in a car-door, Marc Levin's drama still carries emotional force. *West End: Ritzy Cinema*

TEA WITH MUSSOLINI (PG, 117 mins)

Franco Zeffirelli's *Tea with Mussolini* ambles around the houses telling its tale of doity Brits (including Maggie Smith, Judi Dench) adrift in Mussolini-era Tuscany. *West End: Empire Leicester Square, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys. And local cinemas*

THE THIN RED LINE (15, 170 mins)

Terrence Malick's long-awaited return to the director's chair results in a fabulous, fever-struck war film. While a cast of familiar faces vie for attention, all play a determined second fiddle to the film's creeping narcotic mood. *West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Ritzy Haymarket*

ODEON HAYMARKET (PG, 91 mins)

A rattle-hag of comedic misadventure as two Irish scalawags scheme to get their paws on some lottery loot. *West End: Odeon West End. And local cinemas*

WAKING NED (PG, 91 mins)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above. *West End: Curzon Soho, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Screen on the Hill, Virgin Haymarket*

HIGH ART (18, 102 mins)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above. *West End: Curzon Soho, Odeon Camden Town, Ritzy Cinema*

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

Gods and Monsters (15)

A droll satire on the last days of 1930s horror auteur James Whale (Ian McKellen), who is hypnotised by the alluring form of his Beverly Hills gardener (Brendan Fraser). Director Bill Condon won an Oscar for Best Adapted Screenplay.

Happiness (18)

Set in New Jersey, Todd Solondz's second film (*right*) is a dark comedy of loneliness and sexual deviance that reaffirms this young writer-director's talent.

The Faculty (15)

Kevin Williamson does it again with this sci-fi tale of alien invaders. Beautiful people, a sharp script, subversive morale. Piper Laurie. Why can't all teen films be like this?

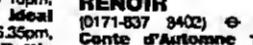
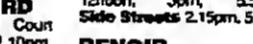
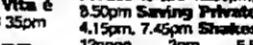
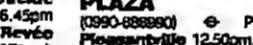
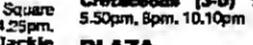
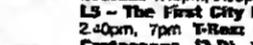
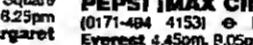
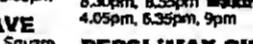
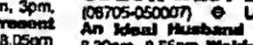
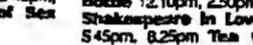
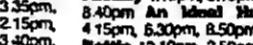
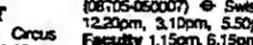
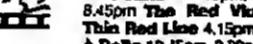
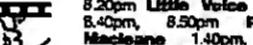
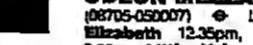
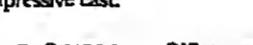
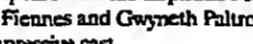
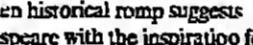
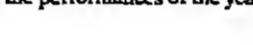
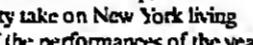
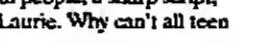
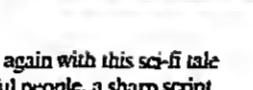
High Art (18)

A portrait of the artist as lesbian screw-up, Lisa Cholodenko's bitterly witty take on New York living (and dying) boasts one of the performances of the year from Ally Sheedy.

Shakespeare in Love (15)

This enjoyable, Oscar-laden historical romp suggests how romance fired Shakespeare with the inspiration for *Romeo and Juliet*. Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow (Best Actress) had an impressive cast.

ANTHONY QUINN AND CHARLOTTE O'SULLIVAN



WEDNESDAY TELEVISION

BBC1

ROBERT
HANKS

TELEVISION REVIEW



WOMEN, who by and large tolerate those things with a certain amount of circumspection, that leaves me aghast, can suddenly begin to understand how ridiculous many are by the time of buying clothes. If you doubt that, just look at the way the originalists, the two twin sisters in *Scrooge*, or the two twin sisters in *The Head Shop* (whose fondness may be congenital, but they are created from nothing, not much, that feels like.

The experience just is rather horrid. I mean, it's what buying things, would happen if you were surrounded with six-year-old girls in the days when four out of five men were married and buried in a British suit, you couldn't get a chance from a girl, not, at least not at first sight. But my and large, the memory gathered here were still, I may be exaggerating, but they suggest, unfortunately, something that's been overdone, and it's what buying things, would happen if you were surrounded with six-year-old girls in the days when four out of five men were married and buried in a British suit, you couldn't get a chance from a girl, not, at least not at first sight.

1.40 *Neighbours* (5) (1957-81), 2.00 *Through the Keyhole* (5) (1956).

2.30 **World Snooker and Billiards**. Continued (20.00-21.00) from the Chinese, now arranged with the 2.30 *Children's BBC*: *Starfall* (Frodo) (1982-3), 2.40 *The Adventures of Shirley Valentine* (1981-2) (1981), 2.40 *That Devil of a Tomcat* (1983-5), 5.00 *Newer Weather* (5) (1984-93).

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3.40 *ITV News Headlines* (1) (1983-63).

4.00 **Children's BBC**: *Starfall* (Frodo) (1982-3), 2.40 *The Adventures of Shirley Valentine* (1981-2) (1981), 2.40 *That Devil of a Tomcat* (1983-5), 5.00 *Newer Weather* (5) (1984-93).

4.35 *That Devil of a Tomcat* (1983-5), 5.00 *Newer Weather* (5) (1984-93).

5.35 *Neighbours* (5) (1) (1984-94).

5.00 *Newer Weather* (5) (1984-93).

6.00 *London Tonight* (1) (1972-91).

6.25 *Party Election Broadcast by the Liberal Democrats* (1) (1984-94).

6.30 *ITV Evening News Weather* (1) (1984-93).

6.45 *World Snooker Championships*: I am still, and I will tell you for the first time, and everyone will be convinced, that I am not, but I am, a snooker enthusiast.

7.00 *Holiday Boating Badly*. Imports from New Montreal in San Francisco, and Leslie Ash in London (5) (1984-7).

7.30 *Tomorrow's World - Worldwide Special*. *Earth and Water* (1) (1984-5). *Future and Polar Sun to Earth* (1984-5). *Minerals*. *Volcanoes* (1984-5).

8.00 *Changing Rooms*. The New York set looks resolute.

8.30 *Party Election Broadcast*. Lib Dem. (5) (1984-93).

9.00 *Star Trek The Next Generation*. Just come, but now everyone wants to have a go.

9.30 *Battersea Dogs' Home*. Dogs and how to deal with them (5) (1984-5).

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1.00 *London Tonight* (1) (1972-91).

1.15 *The X-Files* (1993-4).

1.30 *Powerhouse* (1984), 12.00 *Sesame Street* (5) (1969-71).

1.40 *Star Trek The Next Generation*. Just come, but now everyone wants to have a go.

1.45 *London Tonight* (1) (1972-91).

1.55 *Film The Pied Piper* (1963-2 US).

2.15 *News Weather* (1) (1984-93).

2.30 *Working Lunch* (1984-93).

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